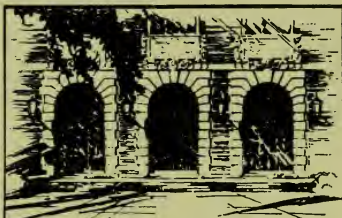


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TO
THE RIGHT HONORABLE
THE EARL OF CARLISLE, F.R.S.,
THIS STORY
IS (WITH PERMISSION) INSCRIBED, BY
HIS LORDSHIP'S MOST GRATEFUL
AND MOST OBEDIENT SERVANT,
THE AUTHOR.

Gen. Rev. Ray 13 Je 52 Chuseult = 3 vol

H O P E .

CHAPTER I.

FRANK NUGENT was one of those unfortunate fellows who are doomed to taste the reverses of fortune at a most critical period of life. Adversity is terrible to the aged, hard to be borne by those in prime of life, and scarcely felt at all (so long as it stops short of actual want) in childhood. But there is an intervening period

between early youth and the vigour of manhood, when its blows fall heavily ; the period when a young man is just about to be launched from the dry-dock of pupilage into the ocean of active life. When the arrows of adversity hit their mark at such an era of our existence, their wound is deep and, in some sense, fatal. The profession just chosen, the career just sketched out, and the prospects colored with the prismatic hues of youth's vision, the studies long addressed to the one object, the nerves strung for the contest—and all is in a moment changed by the advent of ill fortune. The means of joining the profession are wanting—the bright prospects fade into a blank—the study of years is wasted—and the contest must henceforth be, not for fame, success, and honor, but hand-in-hand with grim Want and soul-consuming Poverty. Happy they who fight out the battle nobly and win it ! thrice happy they who pass through the warfare unscathed in innocence of heart, and show no taint of

selfishness, mistrust, and dissimulation—sad diseases of the soul which youth too often bears away from the unequal contest !

Frank was the son of a London Banker. His father was at the head of one of those firms whose very names seem to chink like the gold shovelled over their counters. One cannot pronounce the patronymics of some of these people without instantly thinking of gigantic capital, crisp bank notes, new sovereigns, cheque books, and all the adjuncts, and evidences of a banker's wealth. For ourselves, we look upon such people as a kind of abstraction representing "money:" the idea of a banker, as *a man*—with thoughts, feelings, and pursuits, like those of other men—never enters into our head. It is true that we have banker lords, banker M. P.'s, banker statesmen, and even banker poets; but it is difficult to realise the idea of the noble lords, M. P.'s, and secretaries of state, being the very

same identities as those whose names figure in the cheque-books, or that the Poet of Memory and Italy, and the Lombard Street millionaire are one and the same individual.

Mr. Nugent was a speculative man. He had a great talent for calculation, a keen foresight, and an almost intuitive perception of the results that would follow every event of importance in the political world, so far as they would affect the money market. Many men are able to see the *immediate* consequences of such events, but the intellect which can grasp the remoter and more permanent ones is of a higher and rarer class. Mr. Nugent regarded not merely the temporary agitation of the money-market, like other "bulls" and "bears" of the Stock Exchange, but he saw the political consequences that must ensue from each great movement, he traced beforehand the next measure that would follow as the necessary sequel of the last, and while the eyes of the

less far-seeing were directed to the objects around them his own mental gaze was fixed on the goal to which they were hastening.

To apply this judgment and foresight to the practical object of amassing wealth was the end and aim of Mr. Nugent's life. Forgetting that the man who is the trustee of other's property should be the last to incur risks, by embarking in schemes, which, after all, rest so much on chance; or, perhaps being unable to resist the temptation to accumulate riches in a shorter time than through the legitimate channels of commerce, he became one of the most determined—most extensive, and most successful of stock-exchange gamblers. When wealth rolls in, day by day, under the guidance of mere intelligence, when, by a combination of mental powers, that might serve for the highest order of statesmanship, a man feels himself able to control a fortune—to make every ebb and flow of public opinion bear gold to his coffers, and extract from the change of a

ministry, or the fall of an empire (each foreseen by him) fresh additions to his credit and his possessions—it is scarcely to be wondered at, that the sordid end aimed at is almost lost sight of in the complacent enjoyment of the means by which it is attained. The speculator, such as was Mr. Nugent, forgets that the mere accumulation of gold is his object, while he is exerting his god-like intellect to trace out a vision of the future from the faint outlines of the present—

In the hands of such men riches accumulate as if by magic. But, alas ! they vanish even more suddenly. One great stroke missed—one error of calculation—one financial earthquake deranging all the natural course of events—and the mighty fabric of wealth, reared with such skill, and care, and foresight, falls with a crash. Ruined credit and blighted name, disgrace and bankruptcy—these are the lot of those who lose in the great game of speculation, They know that it is so ; but it is that very

knowledge that makes the game itself so terribly fascinating. What but the alternative between wealth and ruin, fortune and starvation, life and death, makes the gambler, about to play his last great *coup*, feel a careless and resolute courage, to which men, with less at stake, are perfect strangers?

The crash came. Three days sufficed to change the man of unbounded credit, and almost as unbounded wealth, into the penniless bankrupt. And, as usual with such men, he fell not alone. As a matter of course, his great house of business fell with him; his partners were dragged into his ruin, and many a customer of the bank suffered severe and distressing losses, while more than one among the poorer of them followed the man they had so fatally trusted into the *Gazette*.

“What will become of him?” asked the world of itself, when it heard of Mr. Nugent’s ruin.

“What will become of *him*?” thought the

ruined man himself, as he reflected on his son's probable destiny.

But the questions are soon answered. The father blew out his brains, and the son was left a penniless orphan.

He had no mother. He was old enough and good enough to thank God for that—that she, who was the soul of honour, and endowed with even more than a woman's ordinary sensitiveness on such points, did not live to witness her husband's disgrace—that she who was the fondest and most hopeful of mothers could not behold the beggary of her only son, the annihilation of all his schemes of honorable ambition and his expulsion from the station of life in which he had been reared. Thank God she could not see this child of her love and devotion, struggling in his garret for his daily crust—aye, and often *wanting* it too—in spite of every struggle.

He was alone in the world—he had neither sister nor brother, nor any near relatives;

distant ones he had, but he knew little of them, and they made no effort to enquire into his fate, consoling themselves with the ready excuse that people so often find on these occasions—"Oh, there is always something saved in these bankruptcies." They were wrong, however, for nothing was saved. At two-and-twenty Frank Nugent was an orphan and a beggar. It is true that the barrister, in whose chambers he had just become a pupil on trial, after leaving college, offered to receive him, (and even begged him to remain,) without any fee; but where was poor Frank to find the means of existence during his pupilage? No, he was compelled to relinquish all thoughts of the profession, and look only at present for some employment, by which he could procure bread.

The sentence on Adam for deadly sin was that he should *live* by the sweat of his brow. We have altered the sentence in these modern days, and it is now decreed that for no sin at all many shall *starve* by the sweat of their

brow. What a strange and anomalous state of society we live in ! Civilization which should ameliorate life, almost robs us of the power of existing at all. Who that knows the world would not rather see his young son placed down in the midst of the wilds of Australia, without a *sou*, than turned loose in any part of our own most civilized country, in a similar condition ? Starvation in the former would be almost impossible—in the latter, if the lad was neither thief nor beggar, it would be the most probable catastrophe.

The funeral was over—the suicide had been buried at the expense of his creditors, or out of “the estate,” which is the same thing, and the son—stunned by the rapid succession of sad events—the ruin of his prospects, and the loss in so painful a manner of his sole surviving parent—was left to meditate on his future course of life. The prospect was a dreary one, but he knew not *how* dreary, for he knew nothing of the world. He congratulated him-

self on his classical education, and the good use he had made of his time at school and college, and he doubted not that his acquirements would at least insure him a decent, if even a dependent livelihood; he recollected the many advertisements he had seen of "tutors," in the *Times* newspaper, and he determined to put one in on his own account—so he sketched out the following:—

"*Tutor.* A Graduate of ——— College, Cambridge, is desirous of reading with one or two pupils, preparing for college, or for either of the public schools. Address, p. p., to F. N., No. 6, John Street, Maida Hill."

He took the advertisement to the *Times* office, paid his five shillings—he had not many to spare—and waited for the morrow in anxiety. When it came, he called in at the nearest newspaper office, and looked at the paper—the advertisement was there safely enough—he went home to await the answers.

The hours passed on and the postmen came

round, but none of them beat at the door of No. 6.

“It is very strange,” he thought, twice had the postman called at No. 8, but not once at No. 6. Could he have made a mistake and put the wrong number? He slipped round to the newspaper office again, and examined the advertisement once more. No, it was all right, No. 6, legibly printed.

He returned home and asked if letters had come for him. He had told the stupid servant girl at least sixteen times to be sure and take in letters addressed for F. N. The stupid servant assured him that the postman had never been to the house at all.

“Tat-tat!” There it is. He dashes down stairs to receive it, and hears the postman asking if Mr. Muggs lives here. Yes, Mr. Muggs is the clerk who lives on the ground floor, all that long way off from the bank, because he fancies it’s rural, though it’s winter now and the sun is hardly up before Mr. Muggs

leaves the house in the morning, and has set long before he returns at night, so that it is difficult to understand the nature of the enjoyment, derived by Mr. Muggs, from his "rural," abode. Well, the letter is for Mr. Muggs, and Frank Nugent shrinks back heart-sick to his second-floor apartment.

The day has passed away and not a single reply to his advertisement! Poor Frank kicked about far more than he slept in his bed that night. Still the morrow might bring what he hoped. Not so—the morrow was a blank also.

The idea then struck him that he had better make a more general advertisement—offering to attend private pupils, or to give lessons at school and so forth—so he sent another five shillings and waited the result.

"A letter for F. N.," said the postman.

"All right," said Frank, dashing down the stairs—a flight at a time—and seizing the

epistle, he ripped it open and read as he retraced his steps up-stairs, as follows :—

“ SIR,

“ Having two little boys of my own, and wishing to make gentlemen of them—should like to know your terms for teaching—of course, latin and greek, and french, and that sort of thing, and everything that’s proper. If moderate, (I don’t mind a half sovereign a week) shall be happy to send them. I suppose you can give me a character—and that sort of thing.

“ Your obedient servant,

“ JAMES SHANKS.

“ Butcher and Salesman,

“ 78, Whitechapel Road.”

Poor Frank! how he twisted the greasy thing about! Ten shillings a week to teach two little butcher boys! And to give a character, and "that sort of thing!"

It was the only reply he received. He now began to fear that his classical attainments were less valuable, in a pecuniary sense, than he had imagined. It seemed even possible that a classical scholar might starve; and his daily diminishing, though carefully hoarded, little stock of money warned him that such might be his own fate very shortly. How the needy and the wretched pore over the advertising columns of the *Times*, in hopes of finding some chance of alleviating their own sufferings! Day by day did Frank Nugent do this; but, amid the countless wants therein recorded, he could find none which he could supply.

At length his eye caught sight of an advertisement, offering comfortable lodgings to any single gentleman, who, in return for them would devote two hours every day to the in-

struction of three children—a boy in latin, arithmetic, &c., &c.; two girls in French. He determined to answer it, and if possible, secure himself by means of it—a decent shelter free of expense.

Accordingly he went to the house indicated, and enquired for the advertiser. He was shown into a neat little front parlour, and requested to take a seat; and in a few minutes, a smart looking middle aged dame sailed into the room. Upon Frank telling her the object of his call, she began simpering and expressing her fears that the apartments would not be good enough for a gentleman of his appearance—and did he understand that there was no other remuneration? Frank understood everything, and was quite sure the apartments would do. So the lady showed him the rooms which were two decidedly diminutive garrets, rather scantily furnished, though one made pretensions to being a sitting room, and the other a bed-room.

Frank asked to see the pupils, but they were

out. The landlady, poor woman, was evidently anxious to know something about Frank's acquirements, but was afraid to ask "such a gentleman as he looked." However, the gentleman gave her a little information as to his stock of learning; and though he told it modestly enough, it quite overwhelmed the listener—and within five minutes more it was understood, and finally arranged, that Frank Nugent should, on the morrow, become the tenant of the two garrets at No. 98, Charles Street, Pentonville, and the tutor for two hours per diem of Master Marsden, and the two Misses Marsden.

Frank walked away with a lightened heart, though it was not much the poor fellow had secured. The "bed" was gained, but the "board" was a problem still to be solved.

CHAPTER II.

THE house of which Frank Nugent now found himself an inmate was inhabited by Mr. and Mrs. Marsden, their family of four children, and two clerks, who lodged on the first floor. We have mentioned that Frank's pupils were to consist of a boy, and two girls ; but in addition to these soions of the house of Marsden, there was an elder daughter. Fanny Marsden was eighteen years old—many years older than the next child, so that she was more a companion for the teacher, than for her brother or

sisters. But we must not describe the young lady out of her turn.

Mr. Marsden was a coal merchant—at least, Mr. Marsden said so ; but very few people, except his wife, believed him. As for her, the good woman would as soon have doubted the contents of her testament, as Mr. Marsden's assurance on any subject whatever. But it is a fact that Mr. Marsden had a little wooden box somewhere, on some canal, and outside the wooden box was painted, "Marsden & Co." "Office." This looked like business, at all events—especially the "& Co." Never was any mythological personage of more importance, or more imposing, than that greatest of "myths" in modern commerce—"& Co." John Stumps, bootmaker, is common and petty—but Stumps, & Co." is extensive. One can fancy John Stumps patching a mechanic's highlow for sixpence—but Stumps, "& Co.," we can picture to ourselves importing Bordeaux leather by the ton, or whatever may be the measurement

under which calf-skin is shipped. Now, certainly, Mr. Marsden had no partner, and was not very likely to have one, for the profits of his trade, if divided with an “& Co.,” would have looked infinitely ridiculous.

Mr. Marsden had an office, and as *he* said, a wharf; but an uninitiated observer would have called it a shed, just outside the wooden box we have mentioned. Whether he ever had any customers or any coals to give them, we are not in a position to say; but as a small boy whom he employed as a clerk, but which small boy had not been instructed in the rather elementary branch of education, termed writing, as this small boy left from intense melancholy, produced by his isolated position in the afore-said wooden box, and probably also from the non-payment of his weekly salary of one and six-pence—and as the small boy declared that not a soul ever came to the wooden box during the six weeks he sat in it, except Mr. Marsden himself—and that gentleman not very often

—we are disposed to think that Mr. Marsden's was not a very extensive or very lucrative business. Still Mr. Marsden called himself a coal merchant and had "Mr. Marsden, coal-merchant, 98, Charles Street, Pentonville, and Marsden Wharf, Regent's Canal," engraved on his card. It is true that Mr. Marsden omitted to mention a certain other office of which he was the proprietor, and for the present, we shall keep his secret also.

Mrs. Marsden was a very good sort of well-meaning woman, though it is an unfortunate circumstance that those who are eternally making blunders, and doing just what they should not, are precisely the people whom the world terms, "well meaning." There is always something apologetic implied in the appellation. A booby at school, who is not exactly vicious, is a well-meaning lad: a statesman who gets the country into a mess, but is neither corrupt in public or private matters, is a "well-meaning" man. A servant who breaks half your

crockery, spoils your furniture, damages your wife's dress, and blacks your best japan boots, if he is neither dishonest nor insolent, is "really a well-meaning fellow." An author who writes an exceedingly virtuous but very unreadable book, and a poet who strings line upon line of the mildest of milk-and-water verses, piously dull or somniferiously moral, are both extremely "well-meaning writers."

But what a pity it is that they cannot all carry out their praiseworthy intentions, but must leave them to contribute to Dr. Johnson's mosaic pavement of the un-nameable regions.

Mrs. Marsden was no exception to the rule: she was for ever doing something that she ought not. We hope the reader wont suppose that we mean this in any very serious sense, for we assure him that Mrs. Marsden was a perfectly correct lady in the sense in which that adjective is usually applied to the characters of her sex. Nothing could be more exemplary than Mrs. Marsden's devotion to her

husband, or love of her offspring ; but the errors of her life were the blunders of a person whose activity greatly exceeds her mental capacity. She wanted to manage everything—excepting always her husband—but she really was not fitted by nature to be the director or controller of anything or any body.

Fanny Marsden was a quiet, modest, pretty girl of eighteen. She had beautiful hair—it was the most remarkable thing in her appearance, for it was light, glossy, luxuriant, and curling—it hung in ringlets about her face, and it was gathered up into a knot behind, according to modern fashion, but then instead of being plaited or banded round a comb, it fell in a little clump of curls from the knot. She had very dark, blue eyes—some thought they were brown from the deepness of their colour, and she had black eye-brows, which her admirers pronounced exquisite, but which we consider a defect, when coupled with fair hair. The mouth was very well formed, but the teeth

were not quite regular—a little too much apart perhaps—though sufficiently white. The nose was neither Grecian nor aquiline, nor anything else in particular, but a very good nose nevertheless, and certainly not a snub nor a Roman. Altogether, Fanny Marsden, if not a decided beauty, was a very pretty girl, and her figure was one of those neat, plump, rounded ones that are as far removed from the coarse luxuriance of Rubens's women as from the dignified grace of Raphael's Madonnas.

Unfortunately Fanny had received no very good education ; but she had taste and tact to make the best use of her acquirements, and to supply their deficiencies. And even if she were wanting in the finished ease and graceful self-possession of higher-bred young ladies, she was decidedly not vulgar, and had an air of frankness and good-nature about her that was very winning.

It was amusing to see Mrs. Marsden instructing Fanny how to behave. The good

woman really fancied that she was competent to do it, and her corrections of her daughter, though generally given and received in the best temper, were often very ludicrous.

“Fanny, my dear, I wish you would wear your shawl a little straighter. The peak’s all awry instead of being in the middle of your dress. And you’ve been and turned your collar in again. Now really I can’t bear that—I’m sure it never was and never can be correct: and what’s the use of having collars that cost one-and-nine if you’re not to shew them?”

“Fanny, my dear, do make that boy put his spoon in his cup when he’s done his tea. How’s any one to know when you’ve finished, sir, if you don’t?”

The children were not very remarkable in any way. The boy was about ten years old, and was as idle and as happy as most boys of ten are. He went to a cheap school near at hand, but they only taught plain English there,

and his mother wanted him to be a Latin scholar. *Omne ignotum pro magnifico* certainly holds good with regard to the faith that ignorant people have in the omnipotence of Latin.

The two girls, the younger ones, were children of seven and eight years old—rather young pupils for a French master; but Mrs. Marsden was determined to educate them in a finished style, as she said, and so hit upon the lucky expedient of exchanging the two garrets which she didn't want for instruction for her children.

Thus we have given a faint sketch of the house of Marsden. There were, however, two other dwellers on the premises—a Mr. Biddle and a Mr. Spriggett—fellow clerks in some attorney's office, and very fast friends. They fancied themselves "fast" in more senses than one, and so they occasionally spent a night at the Cider Cellars, and were rather incompetent to put out the candle safely when they re-

turned to their abode in the morning. However, they might be classed charitably in the "well-meaning" list, all things considered.

It was late on a winter's evening, when Frank drove up to his new dwelling-place in a cab. Silly fellow! he might have walked, and sent his luggage by a carrier, and so have saved two or three of the very few shillings he had left. But Frank had not yet learned to disregard that wretched bugbear—"What will they think of me?" nor had he fully learned the value of money. The last is a lesson that even severe privation does not teach all at once. A man must not only have wanted a meal—he must have wanted it many a time—he must have striven hard with body and mind to earn his crust, and failed again and again to do so—and *then* he will have learnt the value of every coin to the lowest fraction. God help him in his pupilage!

Frank was admitted by the servant, who assisted him to carry his luggage up to his

garret. She left him with a very slender "dip," in an old tin candlestick, and he sat down, and looked about the room. It was certainly not spacious—about nine feet square; nor luxuriously furnished—two rush chairs, a ricketty table of unsophisticated deal, a brass fender, and a poker, with an old rug in front of the fire-place, but no carpet, was the inventory of its contents. Still there was a fire in the grate, and it crackled and blazed, and danced as merrily as if it were burning in the drawing-room of a palace.

He went into the bed-room next it. A stump bedstead, a very old chest of drawers that had once been painted yellow, though the painter of them must have been an ancient fellow by that time, a white jug and basin, (the jug like an old prize fighter, with a broken nose) standing on a table just big enough to hold them, a chair and a small shaving glass, hanging from a nail to the wall, made up the sum of his dormitory accommodations.

He returned to the sitting-room and drawing one of the luxurious chairs to the fire, he sat down and began to think of the course of events. First he turned to the past—a sad error! How fondly we all hug misery! Is there a day of sorrow and gloom in our past life? Do we not look back on it, ever and anon, with far more constancy than to the brightest era in our existence? Who forgets his pains and his griefs, his sickness and his wants, his disappointments and his lamentations in bygone days? Does he remember half so vividly, or does he strive to recal half so frequently his hours of joy and love, of hope fulfilled, of pleasure tasted, of ambition gratified? Does not the darkness recur to his mind oftener, far oftener than the light? And is this wisdom, is it sense, is it gratitude to the giver of all things?

And so Frank Nugent bemoaned his lost position in the world, wept over the sad re-

verses of his fortune, but forgot to reckon the long years of happiness he had experienced, and write them off against the short score of recent ill.

He came by degrees to the present. It was sad enough; he was the inmate of a poor garret, the possessor of an almost empty purse, and knew not how to improve the one, or replenish the other.

He looked at the future. Aye, *that* is the direction for the eyes of youth to take—forward! Forward to the time to come—with a cool head and a bold heart—glance steadily. There are dangers and difficulties a-head—then there must be courage and determination to conquer them. There are rocks and thorns in the path—then must the feet be steady, and the eye watchful. But look beyond all these, and there is honour and glory for a goal—not the mere honour of worldly fame, nor the glory of popular applause, but the inwardly felt honour

and glory of having beaten down all obstacles, and having won the battle of life unaided and unsupported, save by your own right hand, your own clear brain, your own true heart. Oh, youth, fear not—have faith in God's justice, and your own chivalry, and you shall carve out for yourself a destiny wherein you shall taste content and happiness, such as the spoilt children of fortune can never know—such as wealth and luxury may envy you in vain!

Something of this hopefulness, perhaps, came over the mind of Frank Nugent, for, as he sat and reflected, his face became more cheerful, and he stirred the fire, and rubbed his hands, and hummed some favourite tune.

“Please, sir, missus says her compliments, and would you come and join 'em at supper, sir, to-night?”

Such was the address of the servant who entered the room.

Frank replied that he should be most happy, and was not sorry to hear that the supper was, at that moment, ready, for he had been getting hungry during the last half hour. Cheerfulness is a great sharpener of the appetite.

CHAPTER III.

WHEN Frank Nugent entered the little parlour on the ground-floor, he found all the family of Marsdens assembled, except Mr. Marsden himself. He was received with smiles and curtsies by the hostess, who introduced him first to her daughter Fanny, and then to the younger children. Frank was struck with the appearance of Miss Fanny who looked exceedingly pretty and bewitching, and had, doubtless, taken a little extra pains with her toilet that

evening. She was simply enough dressed ; but she had excellent taste, and knew so well what was becoming to her, and what was attractive to her. Now young ladies are apt to make mistakes about this : they see something which they consider pretty, and they forthwith buy it, and probably make themselves ridiculous by wearing a dress pretty in itself, but utterly unsuited to them. The great maxim of the Grecian sage, “ know thyself,” may be advantageously applied to even so insignificant a purpose as choosing a dress.

Mrs. Marsden begged Frank to be seated, and apologised for Mr. Marsden’s absence, by saying that he had some important business to attend to that day. Frank thought it strange that a coal merchant should have to attend to business at ten o’clock at night ; but he did not say so.

“ We’re waiting for Mr. Biddle and Mr. Spriggett, our two first floors,” said Mrs. Marsden. “ Very gentlemanly young men,

and the most genteel connexions, I assure you."

Frank did'nt doubt it.

"Mr. Biddle's father is an argideck."

"Architect, mama," whispered Fanny, but looking half frightened at her own temerity in correcting the good lady.

"It's the same thing, my dear," said Mrs. Marsden, with a slight toss of the head, "at least it *used* to be in *my* time," and then turning again to Frank, she went on—"and Mr. Spriggett's father is a bailiff."

Frank stared a little—probably rather astonished to hear of the high respectability, in the hostess's estimation, of a sheriff's officer; but Fanny removed his surprise by saying, in explanation,

"I believe Mr. Spriggett's father is bailiff or steward to Lord Burndale—is he not, mama?"

Mama answered "yes," and was preparing to enlarge on the high worldly position of her "first floors," when the parlour door opened

and the two young gentlemen thus designated entered the room.

Mr. Biddle came first, and made a bow, as he entered, but the portion of his person which curved outwards in the operation came in rather sharp contact with the advancing Mr. Spriggett, slightly deranging each of them, for the latter was driven against the wall and uttered a kind of grunt, while Mr. Biddle was precipitated forwards—certainly to the detriment of the graceful effect he had intended to produce.

“Now, Biddle, don’t be so stunningly polite,” said Mr. Spriggett, “’pon my soul, Miss Marsden, it’s only to *you* he makes such a scrape as that,” and Mr. Spriggett grinned while Fanny blushed.

“Don’t talk stuff, Spriggett,” returned his friend, but looking satisfied all the while that Fanny should suppose his politeness specially directed to her.

"I beg your pardons gentlemen," said Mrs. Marsden, "but this is Mr. Newbone."

"Nugent," said Frank, smiling.

Mrs. Marsden begged *his* pardon, and then they all sat down to supper.

Frank sat on one side of the hostess, and Mr. Spriggett on the other, while Mr. Biddle was next to Fanny, and the children heaped up in odd corners of the table.

It was very evident to the meanest capacity that Mr. Biddle had a design on the gentle heart of Fanny Marsden. He had "got himself up" with immense care and powerful effect, being especially remarkable about the shirt studs and neck-tie—the latter one of those extraordinary combinations of blue silk and black (sham) lace ends, which are only to be seen in the windows of economically magnificent hosiers, or on the necks of shop-boys, clerks, and medical students. Mr. Biddle looked with an evil eye on Frank, whom he clearly regarded as an interloper, and one that

might be dangerous to his amatory designs. Frank was blissfully unconscious of this, but was not the less amazed with watching the poor youth's efforts to make himself fascinating, and the very cold though not unkind way in which they were received by Fanny.

"The little coquette," he thought to himself as he palpably smiled, "I would wager that she is far from disinclined to be Mrs. Biddle, but such is the style in which all women, from a countess to a milliner's apprentice, play the fool with a man—or rather make *him* play it."

Profound and wise Frank Nugent! The young gentleman of one-and-twenty, not long out of his pupilage, a judge of that most complex of nature's works—the heart of a woman. He would not have pretended to as intimate an acquaintance with the internal construction of his own watch, and yet it was simple as the alphabet in comparison with what every fool thinks he can read and understand, but which has puzzled and will continue to puzzle to the end of time,

the wisest of philosophers, the deepest of thinkers, the profoundest of metaphysicians—that exquisitely delicate and perfect, though complicated piece of machinery—the heart of woman.

The supper was intended as a treat, for of course neither the “first floors” nor Frank Nugent had any right to a supper at Mrs. Marsden’s expense; but that good lady was naturally inclined to hospitality, and was so highly impressed with the excellence of the “first floors” connexions, that she wished Frank to be introduced to them, that he might have a due sense of the extreme respectability of the household.

The supper consisted of some tripe and onions and some oysters. The former was decidedly the favorite dish, and the latter was only patronized by Frank and Fanny.

“Well, I must say tripe’s a dish I *do* like,” observed Mr. Spriggett.

"It's an uncommon dish, too," said Mr. Biddle; "you don't often get it, *I* can tell you."

"I'm sure I'm glad you like it," said Mrs. Marsden; "Fanny there, never will eat it."

"*Don't* you like tripe, Miss Fanny?" asked Mr. Biddle, with a fascinating smile.

"I can't endure it," said Fanny. Biddle looked unhappy at having eaten it himself. He gulped it down as fast as he could, and then asked for some oysters.

"Do you like the *theaytre* Mr. New-gent?" asked Mrs. Marsden, determined to be right in the name this time. Fanny wished she would take as much pains with "theatre."

"I'm very fond of it," replied Frank; "but I don't often go—it's rather expensive pleasure."

"We never pay," said Mrs. Marsden; "but Mr. M., often gets orders. He's very intimate with newspaper gentlemen, you know."

"Go to the 'Cas' much?" asked Mr. Spriggett.

“ I beg your pardon,” said Frank ; “ what is that ? ”

Spriggett looked at Biddle, and Biddle looked at Spriggett, both meaning by their glances, “ did you ever see such a slow chap as that ? ”

“ The Casino, I mean,” said Spriggett, with an air of disgust at any one requiring such an explanation.

“ Oh yes, I have been there occasionally, but I can't say I'm fond of it.”

Biddle looked at Spriggett, and Spriggett looked at Biddle again, and expressed their contempt for Frank in that look.

Except for the amusement that Frank derived from watching Mr. Biddle and Miss Fanny, the supper was decidedly slow, till the cloth was removed, and the tumblers brought in for “ something warm.” Just as this had been done, and two black bottles had been placed on the table, a knock was heard at the street door. Mrs. Marsden observed ; “ That's Mr. M.,” and Fanny seemed to be rather un-

comfortable, as if the addition of her father to the party was not much desired by herself.

“HoIlloa! here’s rigs!” cried Mr. M., entering the room; “hope you’re all comfortable! Servant Mr. Spriggett — servant Mr. Biddle—servant sir,” turning to Frank, “though I don’t know you.”

Mrs. Marsden introduced Frank as the gentleman that had taken their attics.

“Oh, oh—I recollect—to teach the young ’uns to *parley-vous*, eh?” And Mr. Marsden tried to look as if he’d said a good thing. But Mr. Marsden was not very distinct in his utterance, and Mr. Marsden’s eyes looked rather red, and his legs had a free and independent style of moving, that was not conducive to grace. On the whole, even a charitable observer might suspect that Mr. Marsden had taken something since tea that evening, and rather stronger than that favorite beverage. Mrs Marsden, herself, perceived the fact, and poor Fanny had all along anticipated it, and

warned her mother, that if she gave a supper on the evening that her father went to dine with his club, "The Jolly Tulips," she would be sure to repent it.

"Well, Mrs. M." said the diner out taking a seat next to Fanny; "I'm blessed if you aint coming it strong—*that's* the way the money goes, is it?"

"My dear," said Mrs. Marsden, "don't talk like that, or the gentlemen will think they ain't welcome."

"They're as welcome as flowers in spring—every bit of it," responded Mr. Marsden; "every bit of it. As for—as for Mr. —; as for the first floors—they're bricks; and as for *this* gentleman, the attic, I dare say he's a brick too, though I have'nt tried him." And here Mr. Marsden bestowed a look of stolid approbation on Frank Nugent.

"Help yourselves, gents, and pass the bottle," he continued, "and no heel-taps—we're all jolly tulips together, ain't we, Fanny?"

and he gave his daughter a hug that a bear might have envied.

“Are *you* going to have any, papa?” asked Fanny, timidly.

“Am I?—why not? Do I look like a man to pass the bottle without helping myself, Mr. What’s-your-name?”

Frank said,

“Certainly not—quite the contrary.”

“I should think so,” responded Mr. Marsden. “Why, I’ve been dining with my friends of the club—it’s a very select club, mind you, and we call ourselves ‘The jolly Tulips,’ and that’s just what we are—ain’t a man of us that can’t take his two bottles of wine, and no end of grog afterwards. That’s *my* idea of a tulip.”

Frank bowed assent, though it was rather a new idea of tulips to him, while Mr. Marsden helped himself to a very ‘stiff’ glass of hot rum-and-water.

“Poor stuff, rum, ain’t it?” said Mr.

Marsden. "Good strong port of the old sort, and a topper of brandy—that's what *I* call the drink for a gentleman."

"We were talking about the *theaytre*," observed Mrs. Marsden, with a view of changing the subject.

"What about it? Who's been? who's going?" asked her spouse.

"Nobody, my dear, that I know of."

"Then what's the use of talking about it, eh? Halloa! Master Tommy, what the deuce are you grinning at? go to bed, you young rascal—how dare you be up at this time?"

This was addressed to his son, who was, as usual, in a high state of delight when his father was elated by dining with the "jolly tulips," and was mentally resolving to be a "jolly tulip" himself on the earliest opportunity. The hopeful son and his two little sisters, who were rather frightened than otherwise, departed to bed.

"Suppose we have a song," said Mr. Mars-

den. "Now, Fanny, pipe up. We'll all join chorus."

Fanny protested she could not sing, which her father declared was all his eye; then Fanny said she didn't know any song with a chorus, and her father bade her sing one without, and *he'd* make a chorus to it. And so poor Fanny sung, in a very trembling voice:

"Home, sweet home,"

and her father roared 'with a right tol lol, &c,' at the end of each verse, to a tune of his own composing, and of a very bacchanalian character.

During this song and its extraordinary accompaniment, Mrs. Marsden looked unhappy; the "first floors" were inclined to think it jolly good fun; but were restrained from showing their mirth by fear of offending Fanny, while Frank's feelings were composed of pity for the poor girl, and disgust for her father.

At length, Fanny broke down, and burst out crying, for which her father called her a little fool, and recommended her to go to bed. She would have liked nothing better ; but she feared that he might commit further excesses, and fancied it possible she might be able to restrain him somehow or other. She lingered, therefore, and almost unconsciously looked at Frank through her tears.

“ Oh, never fear,” said her father, who, with the occasional quickness of a half-tipsy sight, had detected the glance. “ Mr. New—What’s-his-name can spare you.”

Fanny blushed dreadfully, and hastened out of the room. Frank blushed, too, with indignation ; Mr. Biddle blushed with savage jealousy, and Mrs. Marsden completed the blushing *quartette* by reddening with shame at her husband’s conduct.

A cloud had fallen on the party. Mr. Marsden told them they weren’t half “ tulips,” and got sulky. So they all went to bed.

“Very pleasant house this,” said Frank, to himself, “an ignorant mother and a drunken father—two horrid gents that seem to feel very hostile to me already, and a little rascal of a boy that will be worthy of his father—he stole all my rum-and-water, when I was speaking to his sister. Fanny’s a good little girl—a deuced deal too good for any of them I think, including that ass, Mr. Biddle. Well—I’ve a glorious life in store for me, apparently. Heigho—Well, never mind—I’m sleepy, and so I’ll think no more.”

Happy Frank! he was soon in the regions of that greatest of republics—sleep.

CHAPTER IV.

It is difficult to imagine anything more perplexing than the condition of a man in our mighty metropolis without money, friends, or occupation. What is he to do? How is he to procure bread? He cannot go and bawl through the streets the list of his accomplishments, and beseech some one to employ him; or he might chance to be taken before a police magistrate, and committed as a vagrant. And *à propos* of police magistrates, the last newly

invented “dodge,” of unscrupulous gentry who are in want of a little capital, appears to be an attempt at suicide—not, of course, a *bonâ-fide* attempt to end their days, but an attack upon their epiglottis, with a razor warranted not to cut, a suspension by a rotten rope, or a jump into a river where there are boats at hand, or into a canal, on the borders of which is perceived a policeman. The “unfortunate man” is brought before a magistrate and lectured on the heinousness of the crime he was about to commit—expresses his penitence, declares that he was “driven to it, &c.,” and gets off with a reprimand that day, and is rewarded for several days afterwards by an ever-flowing stream of private benevolence which pours in its contributions from a shillingsworth of postage stamps to a five-pound-note. Decidedly the “attempted suicide” dodge is a profitable one, and has probably enabled many a worthy individual to emigrate to the “diggings” of Australia.

But what is a penniless man to do, we re-

peat, who is a little too scrupulous to adopt "dodges" of any kind—one, in fact, who is that most miserable of bipeds, a poverty-stricken gentleman? This was the question Frank Nugent had to ask himself, and it was one to which he could find no present answer. With his ignorance of life, and of London life especially, the question seemed less awful than it really was. It takes a great deal of hard experience to convince an unsophisticated youth that honesty, talent, and industry combined, may be insufficient to save a man from starvation. It is utterly contrary to the copy-book maxims and precepts he has studied all his life, and we can even conceive some virtuous gentleman who has never known a *real* want in his life, attacking us for stating so wicked an untruth as the possibility in question. Is it not discouraging to proper emulation, and to virtuous resolution to disseminate such an idea? Possibly it is; but we are stating facts and not writing moral

* precepts for the instruction and guidance of youth. May we even venture to hint our distrust of these "virtue its own reward," precepts addressed to the rising generation as contrary to strict veracity, and therefore decidedly wrong? "What!" asks the indignant gentleman, aforesaid, "do you deny that virtue *is* its own reward?" Not at all, my good sir, but we suspect that it is very often the *only* reward virtue gets; and when you attempt to give a narrow reading to the maxim and to insinuate that virtue puts money into the breeches' pocket, we dissent from you and consider you a bad teacher because a false one.

"If I could but get an engagement as a clerk," said Frank to himself, "at £80 or £100 a year, I should be contented for the present."

The eternal advertising columns of the "*Times*" were resorted to again, and eagerly did the poor fellow's eye scan every separate—*Wanted*. A motley list it makes! Clerks,

houses, maidservants, governesses, linendrapers' assistants, loans of money, town-travellers, family washing, apprentices, midshipmen, salesmen, &c.

Frank answered a great many of them ; but he was wasting paper and postage stamps, for there were sure to be scores of applicants better adapted for the vacancy than himself. He never received a reply to his communications.

An unhappy man in London contracts a habit of wandering about the streets without any very settled purpose, staring in at the shop-windows, especially at the goods he least wants, or poring over old book-stalls. Frank spent three-fourths of most of his days thus, and often found himself in a state of physical exhaustion from walking and fasting so long. On these occasions, he looked out for a quiet coffee-house to rest in. He was too poor to select a handsome tavern in a good thoroughfare—so he dived down the bye-lanes till he

came to one of those economical establishments where coffee is retailed at three-half-pence and tea at two-pence a cup, and where the windows contain the tempting allurements of two French rolls, half-a-dozen eggs, two coffee cups, a tea-pot, and a piece of streaky bacon, specimens of the dainty fare awaiting the hungry or thirsty visitor. Frank contracted quite a feeling of affection for one of these places from constantly frequenting it—for in truth he found it more economical to order a couple of eggs, some bread and butter, and a cup of coffee at such a place than to attempt the most moderate of dinners anywhere else. His bill amounted to five-pence halfpenny, and as he generously bestowed another halfpenny on the waitress, he contrived to dine for sixpence, which we think by no means an extravagant sum for the chief meal of the day.

The house frequented by Frank was in a cross street out of Greek Street, Soho. Of course our well-bred readers have never fre-

quented such a locality, and so we will venture to describe it to them. Perhaps they may know something of Soho Square from the circumstance of one corner of it being occupied by the bazaar, which used to be the earthly paradise of our youthful imagination, but which is now so terribly eclipsed by the gay and gaudy Pantheon. The poor old bazaar seems to feel its altered condition, for it looks gloomier and duller than ever, while the sternness of its hall-porter that used to make our infantile soul tremble has now increased to such an extent that we are surprised he has not been offered an engagement as mute by some enterprising West-end undertaker. We recommend Messrs. Banting to look to it—or to him rather.

The rest of Soho Square is occupied by piano-forte makers, music-sellers, furniture-dealers, and one or two private houses. From the south-west corner of the square runs Greek Street. Now Greek Street is one which must

puzzle every reflective pedestrian that passes through it. What dingy, dark, smoky, large, semi-respectable houses it has ! What are they like inside ? Who lives in them ? We can imagine the old-fashioned broad staircase—the chimney-pieces half way up to the enormously high ceilings—the tall folding-doors—the tarnished gilded mouldings of the walls and the shutters—the worm-eaten floors—the wainscots of painted deal, five feet high—and the high, narrow windows, with a thick crust of long undisturbed dirt darkening their slender panes. We can fancy them furnished with old cabinets, Turkey carpets whose patterns are no longer visible, high-backed chairs, so quaintly carved, and so curiously uncomfortable, venerable tables, with their legs bulging out at the bottom into a kind of stumpy foot ; dingy moreen curtains, that once were drab, but are now a fresh coffee colour ; old chandeliers of rusty brass, with a few little diamond-shaped pieces of glass

strung in ornamental festoons on them ; and little round mirrors in frames, that once were gilt, stuck up even above the tall chimney-piece, and surrounded by an eagle, from whose beak hangs a chain with a ball at the end of it. All this we can imagine ; but who lives amidst all these ghostly memorials of a past age ? We don't know, though we like to fancy it is only miserly old Jew money-lenders, ancient Chancery lawyers, and venerable spinsters, who hate the world—anything young, fresh, or beautiful, would be so monstrously out of place in such a locality.

Passing down Greek Street we come to a number of streets and lanes, branching off in a variety of directions, and forming that particular section of London called St. Giles's though the parish of that name is a most extensive one. St. Giles's, however, *par excellence*, means that very interesting portion of the parish about Seven Dials. It has lost some of its marked characteristics of late years, from

the attempts that have been made to improve it. It is far more respectable than it used to be—that is to say, you may walk about its streets and lanes now without being obliged to keep your hands tightly thrust into your pockets, to protect your purse, or to look out for a policeman to conduct you through its wilds. You don't see as many tipsy Irish-women as you used, and the children playing in the gutters are not quite so ragged as formerly. But there is much of the old characteristics clinging to the place still—the second-hand boot and shoe shops, with their fusty, leathery odours—the marine-store shops—the fried-fish stalls—the bird-cage makers—the rabbit, dog, and bird-fanciers shops—and the grand plate-glass, gas-blazing gin palaces, which seem to be more resplendent as the neighbourhood about them is more wretched and poverty-stricken. A moralist may, perhaps, trace cause and effect in the very circumstance.

On the borders of this delectable locality are one or two very quiet, poor streets, and in one of these streets was a coffee-house, such as we have above described, except that in addition to the ornaments, eggs, rolls, and streaky bacon, it displayed in the window a long list of daily, weekly, and monthly papers, and magazines, all of which were said to be "taken in here." The visitor who expected to find them all, would probably be himself "taken in there;" but, nevertheless, they had a good sprinkling of them—a far better supply than is found at most first-rate taverns, where the *Times* and the *Post*, a couple of evening papers, and *Bell's Life in London*, are generally all the literary entertainment provided for their frequenters.

In this economical coffee-house, Frank Nugent found himself two or three times every week. He first entered it by chance, and finding everything clean and comfortable, though homely enough, he generally bent his

steps towards it afterwards in his long purposeless rambles about town. Perhaps its great attraction was the sight of the papers and magazines it afforded him. To the papers he turned not only for news, but in the hope of finding some prospect open to him in the advertisements—the magazines he read for mental recreation.

Frank had not much opportunity of judging the sort of company who frequented this coffee-house, as he went to it at an hour of the day when most men were occupied in their respective callings. Occasionally he saw a respectable mechanic taking a cup of coffee, and conning the *Family Herald*, or a shopman from one of the neighbouring shops studying the news of the day. But there was an individual whom he met most constantly. He was a spare, tall, pale-faced man, with a restless eye that never seemed to keep to one column at a time, of any paper its owner was reading. The man wore a black body coat, and grey

trowsers, both of which must have been so long in existence that they must have forgotten the tailor who made them. His double-breasted waistcoat had been a black silk one, but it was so polished by grease and wear, that its texture was difficult to detect. His hat, too, was very limp in the brim, and very shiny, from long wear, and not from newness; his Blucher boots were patched and sewn in half a dozen different places on the upper leathers; his shirt was invisible, but a ragged collar, not of the cleanest, projected over a rusty black neckcloth, that was tied with some attempt at grace, and with long, limp, pendant ends.

This man invariably had a cup of coffee and a roll—sometimes a piece of butter, but not often. He seized the *Times* as soon as he could lay hands upon it; but never was seen glancing over the parliamentary reports, or the leading articles, or the foreign intelligence—not even over the advertisements—but always poking into every corner where little

scraps and extracts were to be found, filling up the spaces, proclaimed vacant by the "devil" to the sub-editor.

These scraps seemed to be the attractive bits to him; and as his restless eye danced about over them, he would pull out a very dirty old pocket-book, and make notes, or scribble down some mysterious word or two, and then thrust away the paper from him. After this, he would take up one of the magazines, or monthly periodicals, and read it quietly and rationally, like any other mortal—his eye would remain steady, and his pocket-book was left undisturbed in his pocket.

Frank Nugent began to feel a little curiosity about this peculiar individual. And the seedy-looking man returned the compliment, for he was evidently puzzled to know what could bring a young man of Frank's appearance to so very humble a place of entertainment. In fact, Frank often caught him peeping over the top of the magazine he was reading, and

watching him with much apparent interest, though directly he found himself detected, he dived his head down again into his book, and pulling out a very unpleasant-looking pocket-handkerchief, assaulted his nose with it most vigorously.

At length, Frank contrived one day to place himself in the box which the seedy stranger generally used, and he kept hold of the "*Times*," determining not to relinquish it, in case of the man's arrival, until he asked him for it.

He arrived about the hour Frank expected him, and went straight to his accustomed seat. He looked uncomfortable when he saw the *Times* engaged, and though he took up one magazine after another, it was clear that he could not settle his mind to read either of them.

"May I trouble you for the *Times* after you, sir?" he said, at length, with a very polite bow to Frank.

“Certainly—you are welcome to it now,” replied the latter. “I am afraid I have been keeping you from it.”

“Don’t mention it,” said the seedy man.

And immediately he began running his restless eye over the corners of the paper, and pulling out his dirty pocket-book, and making the usual memoranda. During this process, he seemed to forget Frank’s presence, but when he came to the end of his researches, and thrust aside the paper, he looked up at him.

“Not much news to-day,” observed Frank.

“No,” said the seedy man, doubtfully, for he had not read a line of “news,” and apparently never did.

“Perhaps you don’t care for politics,” observed Frank, feeling however that his own freedom was bordering on impertinence.

“They’re out of my line altogether,” said

the seedy man, "though I *am* connected with the newspaper press."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Frank, not a bit less astonished than he looked. "I presume you're a—" he was going to say printer, or compositor, or he didn't exactly know what; but the seedy man interrupted him by saying—

"I write for the papers. It isn't my only occupation, for I do copying work all the morning for a member of Parliament. He calls me his secretary—ha! ha!—a pretty secretary I look, don't I? Six shillings a week for a secretary, ha! ha!"

"What!" said Frank. "I beg your pardon, but did you say—"

"Six shillings a week, I said," interrupted the seedy man, "that's my salary as secretary, ha! ha! to a member of Parliament. He's a Scotchman, and a great calculator. He's calculated my wages very closely—don't you think so, sir?"

“Upon my word,” replied Frank, “I scarcely know whether to think you are amusing yourself at the expense of my credulity or not.”

“*I wish I were ; but I’m not,*” said the seedy man. “What I tell you is gospel truth. *You can’t believe it—no prosperous young gentleman like yourself could.*”

“I don’t know about my prosperity,” said Frank, smiling. “I wish I had a little more of it ; but indeed I’m no better—. Well, never mind ; but really you have raised my curiosity by what you have told me.”

“Well, sir,” said his companion, “if you don’t mind coming to so poor a place as my home, I’ll tell you my history—it’s not much of a one either—but it will help to shew you how hard it is to get a living in this great city, even when you are honest and industrious. Sometimes I think it’s only the rogues that *do* prosper ; but I don’t want to get that

idea into my head—so I won't think about it. Will you come with me, sir? It is not far from here?"

Frank expressed his readiness, and left the coffee house with his strange acquaintance.

CHAPTER V.

THE seedy man led Frank through one or two very questionable streets, till he came to a kind of lane, at a dingy-looking house in which he stopped, and pulling out a door key that looked large enough to figure in a Christmas pantomime, he opened the door, and bade Frank enter. The youth followed his host up a very serpentine flight of uncarpeted stairs lighted only by a few rays that made their way under the bottoms of the doors on the

landings. On the third floor they stopped, and then entered the front door.

Frank began to think his own little garrets quite luxurious as he looked on the contents of this one. And yet it contained about the same quantity of furniture as his own, and not very inferior in quality ; but there was a dirty, wretched, ill-cared-for look about the place that made it inexpressibly squalid in the young man's eyes. Everything was more or less dilapidated ; two panes of glass were broken, and badly patched with brown paper. The ceiling displayed two or three holes in the plaster ; the bedstead was without its top ; an old chest of drawers had lost one of its feet, and stood awry ; the patchwork-counterpane had a large angular rent in it, displaying a very brown blanket underneath ; the water-jug was without a handle, and the basin had a large piece chipped out of it ; one of the chairs had lost the top rail of the back, and the other had a hole in the seat, with the

rushes sticking out downwards in all directions. The only thing that seemed perfect was a very small deal-table, on which was a little stone ink-bottle, a piece of blotting paper, and an old steel pen.

“Not a very handsome place to bring a gentleman of your appearance to,” said its occupant, half apologetically and half bitterly.

“Don’t make any apologies, pray,” replied Frank. “I have come to hear your history, you know, and I dare say that would compensate me for entering very much worse quarters than these.”

“I don’t know about that,” said the seedy man. “It’s but a poor history ; but I told you the moral of it, and now you shall hear the story itself :

“My name’s Tonks—David Tonks. My father was a tailor at Birmingham, and I was his only son. So he sent me to King Edward’s grammar-school, and determined to make me a gentleman. I was never to be apprenticed to

his trade, perhaps not to any trade. I was to be a great scholar, and, of course, I was to do wonders with my learning. What fools parents are when they let out all their ambitious wishes for their children in their children's presence ! No surer way of preventing a boy from rising to greatness than always telling him that he will be a great man. It was fortunate for me that a public school took some of the conceit out of me that my parents inspired me with. But I was'nt happy at school. I was teased to death with the boys' jokes about my father's trade. 'Young snip' was my nickname, and I was seldom called by any other. I got tired of fighting about it, and so I became resigned to the appellation.

“When I was fourteen my mother died. Heaven rest her soul, for she was a good and kind mother to me, though she was a bad prophetess. On her death-bed she told me she was sure that I should live to be a great man — and at that time I believed her. She little

fancied how terribly the reality would be the reverse of her anticipations.

“Poor mother ! I mourned for her longer than most grown men could mourn for any human being. I had nothing else to love in the world—for my father was a man whom you *could not* love. He had some sort of feeling for me ; but it was that of pride, because he fancied I should be a man of distinction—for he had imbibed my mother’s fatal error of imagining me a genius. He was a selfish man too ; and it has always struck me that a very selfish person is the least loveable of creatures. Even women, with all their blindness in such matters, seldom love deeply a man who is all selfishness.

“Six months after my mother’s death, my father married again. And such a wife ! A gay, giddy, ill-bred, handsome impudent girl, of two-and-twenty ! What a contrast to the gentle, tender being I had called ‘mother,’—whose memory was as fresh in my heart as the

day after her death, and for the loss of whom my tears fell night after night, when I was alone in my little bed-chamber. They tell us it is wrong to pray for the dead—I hope not, for I have never ceased to do it since she left the world. I don't know how or why it is, but I am sure that I could not sleep if her name had no place in my supplications.

“My step-mother had not been many weeks in our house before I saw that my removal from it would be a matter of course. She hated me—principally, I think, because she knew how I revered my mother's name and memory. My father was completely under the control of his new wife, and by her amiable guidance, soon began to manifest a dislike to his only child. I determined to relieve him of my presence, and I took an early opportunity of telling him so. He did not shew much surprise, and certainly no sorrow.

“ ‘Where do you wish to go to?’ he asked.

“ ‘To London.’ I replied.

“ ‘What shall you do there ?’

“ ‘Get my living in the best way I can,’ was my reply. ‘You have always told me that I shall be a great man—let me go and try.’

“He did not want much pressing; he told me to be very steady—not to get into bad company—hoped I should’nt get tired of London, and then come back and make a fool of him as well as myself—gave me £50 and his blessing, and dismissed me.

“ ‘Good-bye, David,’ said my step-mother; ‘you’ll be back again soon, *I* know.’

“ ‘Never while you are Mrs. Tonks,’ said I, and I departed that day.

“I came up to London and drove to the inn where the coach stopped, and there I rested for the night. I won’t bore you with a description of my first impressions of this great city. They were not those of such intense wonder as is felt by most people from the country, because I came from so large and

bustling a town, and I had heard so much of the size and traffic of London that it would have been difficult for either to have exceeded my expectations. I thought it a very ugly place, and I think so still.

“For the first week I did nothing but roam about the streets and stare at everything that excited my curiosity. At the end of the week I stared at something else—my hotel bill. It appeared to me enormous, though I dare say it was a very moderate one, and I am sure I had been economical enough in my orders. At all events it showed me the necessity of looking out for employment of some kind, or I should soon be a beggar. I had no one to apply to for advice on the subject, so I consulted my landlord. He appeared to be rather astonished at something—whether at my “greenness” or my helpless condition, or my absurd notions of life, I don’t know. However, he recommended me to advertise for a situation as clerk; and he helped me to compose an advertisement. He

was not a bad sort of man, and really took some kind of interest in me. The advertisement appeared and I got the answer. They all offered me the same terms—no salary the first year—£40 for the second (if I suited them) and a progressive increase afterwards. Of course I could accept neither, as I had no means of maintaining myself for a year, but by what I might earn. I looked very blank, but my landlord was not astonished. He did me one piece of service, however, against his own interests. Instead of letting me remain at his hotel till I had spent all my money, he advised me to get a cheap lodging. I did so, with his assistance, and again I tried for a situation.

“I won’t trouble you with all my endeavours and failures; but after several weeks I got a berth as light porter in a city warehouse, at twelve shillings a-week. What a splendid start in life for the youth that was to attain greatness!

“It was a life of drudgery I lived – not degrading in itself, but certainly inspiring a feeling of degradation in the mind of a lad who had received an education such as mine. I did my duty as well as I could, but I was still trying to get something better.

“I was very fond of writing down my observations and thoughts when I was alone at night, in my lodgings. One day the idea struck me that I might write something for publication. I was mad with the notion. I set to work and wrote a little story—I copied it out carefully, and I dropped it into the editor’s box of a cheap weekly publication that I used to read. How eagerly I ran my eye over each succeeding number to see if *my* piece were in it. How long was I doomed to disappointment. But at last, there it was in type. I spelled it over, read and re-read it, wondered who else would read it, speculated as to the chance of its being noticed by the reviewers—and in fact made a fool of myself. I rushed

down to the office and asked if I could see the editor.

“ A dirty-looking clerk stared at me.

“ I repeated the question.

“ ‘ Aint in,’ was the laconic reply.

“ ‘ When will he be ?’ I asked.

“ ‘ Don’t know.’

“ I still lingered.

“ ‘ What do you want?’ asked the dirty clerk.

“ ‘ I want,’ said I, rather timidly, ‘ I want to know whether I have anything to receive for the piece I wrote which is printed to-day.’

“ ‘ *You* wrote!’ said the clerk. I was in my light-porters’ dress.

“ ‘ Yes,’ replied I, with dignity, ‘ The Orphan Bride.’

“ The clerk gave a grunt, and looked in a dirty ledger, or book of some sort.

“ ‘ Orphan Bride gratuitous,’ said he, and closed the book.

“ ‘I never *said* it was to be gratuitous,’ I exclaimed, indignantly.

“ ‘Didn’t say the other thing, I suppose,’ said the clerk, ‘we never pay without it’s agreed.’

“And so I got nothing for the Orphan Bride.

“I wish the same fate had attended everything else I wrote, but it didn’t. I got a few shillings once or twice for my writings, and so I resolved to turn author. I left my situation, bought a stock of pens, ink, and paper, and set vigorously to work writing.

“If ever I tried a magazine of any standing, I either heard nothing at all of my M.S. or it was returned to me, “declined with thanks.” Generally I lost both my time and my M.S. With the lower class of publications I succeeded better, though the pay was so small that I could seldom earn above ten shillings a-week—indeed that was the average.

“Don’t suppose I throw the blame of my

failure on others—it was all my own fault. I had not talent enough to succeed as a writer. I *know* it now—but knowledge comes too late. I persevered, I wrote day and night, tore up what I didnt like after I had written it, and sent out such heaps of M.S's that my handwriting must have been known to every editor in London. But I made no progress. Two of the cheap things I wrote for failed, and I was near starvation.

“ At last a printer, who knew me as writing for one of the papers, made a proposal to me. It was to be editor of a cheap serial he was going to start. I was to have one fourth of the profits as my remuneration, and to sign a partnership agreement to that effect. At first, our serial went on well; but by degrees the sale declined. I thought we had better give it up, but the printer refused. We went on till at last the paper manufacturers, who supplied us with paper, sued us, and got judgment. The printer absconded, having previously sold his

stock unknown to me. My person was all that was left to satisfy the judgment of the paper-makers.

“They took it. They locked me up in prison, where I remained a poor debtor on prison allowance, till, at length, I was set free through means of the fund for the relief of indigent debtors.

“It was much to regain freedom, certainly, though want and hunger seemed very likely to accompany mine. I wandered about the streets not knowing what to do, when I by chance became the witness of a dreadful accident by upsetting of a heavily laden wagon, which fell on to the footpath and crushed two passers-by to death. I was very much shocked, and felt very sick at the sight. I went into a coffee house to rest, and then the idea struck me to write an account of the accident I had just seen for the papers. I invested some of the few pence I had in pen and paper, and did so, making copies for each daily journal. I took it

to the offices, and left my name and address, (another poor lodging I had got), as a voucher for my truthfulness. Next day I went again to the coffee house. Three of the papers had inserted my 'shocking accident,' though they had terribly curtailed it! I went to the offices to ask for payment—they told me to call again on certain days, which were their settling days, with my bills, calculated at a three half-pence a line. There were about twenty lines, so that it produced me seven shillings and six-pence.

"Henceforth I became a 'penny-a-liner.' I went half over London every day to collect materials—accidents, and such like things. I asked for news at all the police stations, and sometimes I got some which served my purpose. I frequented meetings, not important enough to be visited by regular reporters, and made notes of the proceedings which I turned into paragraphs and reports. One way and another I contrived to earn from ten to fifteen shillings a week.

“I often tried to get some better employment, but I could not succeed. ‘What have you been doing?’ was the question, which when answered, always shut me out of any chance. By degrees I became so accustomed to my wretched sort of literary life, that I was unfit for any other, and don’t think I could follow any other if I tried.

“Once only did I succeed in any other way. I saw an advertisement, stating that a few hours’ daily employment was offered to a ready pen-man. I applied at the address given, and was offered six shillings a week to be secretary to an M. P.! I couldn’t believe my ears for some time; but I accepted the offer, and was installed in the ‘honorable member’s’ library every day from 9 till 1, copying out figures and calculations, searching out speeches from Hansard, and such work as that. And so I live, sir—secretary to an M. P. and penny-a-liner to the press in general.”

“But,” said Frank, “why did you never apply to your father? Surely he would have aided you.”

“For the first few years, (for my little narrative extends over twelve years, though it is so monotonous of misery),” was the reply, “I was ashamed to do so. Afterwards I saw his death in a Birmingham paper, and I managed to make some enquiries about his will, but I heard that he had left *everything* to his second wife.”

“Had he any children by her?”

“None.”

“What has become of her?” asked Frank.

“I have never heard,” answered the seedy man—“never; but sometimes I wonder whether my father ever thought of his only child on his death-bed. Something tells me that he did. I have had strange dreams and fancies about it—but I can never know.”

“You *may* !” said Frank, with deep emphasis, though he scarcely knew why.

The seedy man started, looked fixedly at his visitor, and said—

“Those two simple words have rung in my ears as though pronounced in my own dear mother’s accents, whenever I have thought on this subject. Well,” said he, after a pause, “*Time is the great avenger !*”

CHAPTER VI.

SOMETHING like the feeling of friendship sprung up between Frank Nugent and the unlucky David Tonks. The simple narrative of the poor penny-a-liner had made a strong impression on the young listener. It suggested this very palpable but very unpleasant question—"May not my lot be like his?" Doubtless Frank was vain enough to think that there was something about himself which must prevent him from ever degenerating into the seedy,

slip-shod wretch the other had become. And yet, looking at the whole picture, and not at peculiar portions of it, he could not disguise from himself that it might portray his own future.

“What have I beyond what this man possessed when first he was launched into London-life to earn his own bread?” Such was the very rational query he proposed to himself. And the answer was, by no means, satisfactory.

“In respect of money, I am even poorer than he, for he started with almost as many pounds as I now possess shillings. As for education, his had been, I presume, very similar to my own, though mine has been rather more perfected. As to experience, we are almost on a par. In point of age, I have the advantage of a few additional years—if it *be* an advantage. In birth and breeding, I have also the advantage. But are these advantages of much account in the position in

which I am placed ? At all events, I will try to bear in mind that success is by no means within the grasp of all who determine to try for it."

A very sensible resolution, Frank Nugent, and one too apt to be forgotten both by those who struggle in the battle of life, and those who watch and judge them.

What made Frank particularly impressed with the poor penny-a-liner's history, was the fact that, for a few days previous to hearing it, an indistinct idea of pursuing literature for a livelihood had been flitting across his own brain. And what fascination there is in the idea ! How different from the mere taste or fancy that leads men to select an ordinary profession or calling ! A youth may deliberate and doubt whether he will be a lawyer or a physician—a soldier or a merchant—an engineer or an advocate ; but there is no such luke-warmness about literature. She claims her votaries, heart and soul, or not at all. Little do they

understand the spirit which guides the man of letters, who fancy that he pursues authorship as a lawyer studies his 'Coke upon Lyttleton,' not for the pleasure of the pursuit itself, but as a means to an end—the three meals a day! It is not the mere profit of book-writing that allures the author, it is the intellectual delight of his self-imposed task. Compared with other pursuits, how poor are the pecuniary rewards of literature! Compared with literature how meagre are the pleasures to be found in the pursuit of any other "professions!" Nay it is even a degradation to the calling of an author to call it by so unworthy a name. It gains no wordly rank—it seldom secures competence, and still more rarely wealth. Yet who that pursues it would voluntarily abandon it for the most honoured or the most profitable of ordinary professions? Who that has thrown himself into the arms of literature would not rather succeed in teaching and delighting the world, though he did so in personal obscurity,

and in straitened means, than in gaining titles and honours, or amassing wealth in the less spiritual pursuits of other men ?

It was certainly with little of this enthusiasm for a literary life that Frank Nugent took up his pen to make his first essay for publication ; but then he was not yet launched on the sea of letters, and would, perhaps, never have thought of venturing there, but for the *res augusta domi*, which drives us into all sorts of unexpected places.

Did any man ever begin to write for publication without first attempting "poetry?" We verily believe not. We feel convinced that if the secret history of every author's literary life were known, it would be found that every one of them tried verse before plain prose. It is not so easy to tell why, for it is lamentably true that not one man, not one *author*, in five hundred, can write decent poetry. We all know the history of poor Cicero's failure, when he attempted to cultivate

the Muses—he took counsel by it, and abjured wooing the goddesses further. Most of our great novelists, historians, essayists, and others, who have gained fame and honour in prose, have, doubtless, experienced as humiliating failures in poetry at the outset of their career; but fortunately, the failure was before their names were known to the world, and they have kept off the rocks of rhyme ever since. Occasionally the novelists shew a hankering after the old pursuit, by dropping in a sonnet or a song, supposed to be written or sung by one of the characters of their story, and introduced with a few depreciating remarks, as if they did not think much of it themselves. The sly dissemblers! they know they are prouder of those dozen lines of rhyme than of all the rest of the three volumes of prose, and are far more delighted at a favourable notice of them, or a quotation made from them, than they would be at a laudatory review of the book in the *Edinburgh*, the *Quarterly* and *Blackwood*

combined. But they don't often get it, poor fellows; for, sooth to say, they don't often deserve it. Scott is the only great novelist, who was a great poet also. Sir Edward's fame would be but meagre if it rested on his poetry. Dickens has not written a line of verse that any one quotes or remembers, though who does *not* quote and remember almost *every* line of prose he has penned? Thackeray has courted the Muses more than once; but they have not smiled on him. On the other hand, two or three poets have written readable novels—though generally but one a piece—as Goldsmith's "Vicar of Wakefield," Tom Hood's "Tylney Hall," and glorious Tom Ingoldsby's "Cousin Nicholas."

Frank Nugent wrote poetry. It was not bad, and therefore read only by those who like "tolerable" poetry; but for our part, we should think it no loss to the world if at least nine tenths of the verses that were in it, ancient and modern, were destroyed and for-

gotten. Certainly we should condemn poor Frank's among them. Perhaps the magazine editors to whom he sent them were equally fastidious, for they declined printing them, though they assured him that they were very much obliged to him for sending them, and thought them very good, but poetry was a drug in the market—every body wrote poetry and nobody read it.

He next attempted a drama in blank verse. How difficult it is to knock the "harmonious numbers" out of a young scribbler. The drama was to be in five acts, but he began to find his materials not quite sufficient for that length, and though the hero made terribly long speeches, and the heroine talked much more about all the attributes of love, and the wonderful things that remarkable passion was capable of effecting, than young ladies really in love, generally find tongue for—though even the servants and messengers and the "first citizens" and the "second soldiers" and such other

characters in dramas of a poetical cast gave long-winded utterance to their sentiments in very *stiltified* verse, yet it became necessary to confine all those things within the comparatively small space of three acts. And when the three acts were done what was the history of the drama? Alas! as blank as the verse it was written [in. The best recipe for a drama is Demosthenes's sentence about the prime requisites of oratory, "action, action, action." Poor Frank's was rather of Hamlet's—"words, words, words."

As a matter of course, not a manager in London would look at it, which Frank Nugent considered cruel and stupid—yet, after all, they only saved him from being publicly "damned," and so deserved his gratitude.

The next attempt was a tale. It was plain prose at last, though dreadfully romantic in language, sentiment and incident. The Minerva press would have printed it in raptures,

milliners' apprentices would have wept over it. and papas of a practical turn of mind would have forbidden its appearance in the house as "a parcel of romantic trash, fit to turn the heads of all the silly girls in the place." It travelled about a great deal from one magazine to another, staying longer at some offices than at others, and running many risks of lighting the office fires out of the waste-paper basket; but at last it found a home in the pages of a penny periodical and produced its author three guineas.

This last fact was consolatory to poor Frank who had been gradually reduced to a perfectly empty pocket. Indeed he seriously contemplated starvation, and could not afford even to enter his old cheap coffee-house. He was wandering near it one day when thus reduced, and he met Mr. David Tonks, rushing along towards it. Frank accosted him—they were now on most friendly terms, and the

penny-a-liner had been entrusted with all his young friend's history.

"Well, Mr. Tonks—going to see the paper, I suppose."

"Yes—yes," said David, "and you've just come from them—eh?"

"No," replied Frank, "I have not been there to-day."

"Wont you come now?" asked David.

"No, I thank you," returned Frank, "I am not in a humour—at least I'm busy."

"*Are* you though?" exclaimed Mr. Tonks, with a look of delight, "I'm glad of it; then you've succeeded, eh?"

"No," said Frank, with a half-melancholy smile, "I've had no success yet, my good friend."

"Well, well, I wont, enquire, I'm too forward I know; but I didn't mean to appear inquisitive."

"You are too good to be anything so disa-

greeable," said Frank, eagerly, "I wish I had a few more such disinterested and such warm friends. But don't let me keep you from the paper—good bye."

Frank shook the poor fellow's hand warmly and left him, walking on rapidly. Before he had gone many paces he heard a quick step behind him. He turned round and saw David Tonks exerting himself greatly to overtake him.

"What is it?" asked Frank, stopping.

"I beg your pardon for running after you," said David, out of breath; "but I want to speak to you very much. Will you come into my lodging for a few minutes? Can you spare the time? It's the next street, you know."

"Certainly," said Frank, who of course had no engagement of any kind elsewhere.

David Tonks did not utter another word till he had conducted Frank Nugent to his poor garret, and made him take a seat. Then, with

a good deal of hesitation, and a very embarrassed look, he spoke as follows :—

“Mr. Nugent, we haven’t been acquainted long, and I’m almost afraid you may think what I’m going to say a great liberty; but I hope you won’t. I think—that is, I fear—I really don’t know how to say it; but to be plain, I’m afraid, Mr. Nugent, you must find that living in London without making money is very expensive.”

“Not very expensive to me, my good friend,” said Frank, smiling; “for I’ve nothing to spend, and I’m too poor to run into debt.”

“Well—yes—that’s just it,” said David, looking more embarrassed than ever; “but I mean—excuse me—don’t you find it very hard to live?”

“Very hard indeed,” returned Frank, with a very sickly smile: “so hard that I think I shall find it impossible soon.”

“Don’t say that,” rejoined David—“don’t *think* that. Despair is the last feeling that

enters a brave heart. You will succeed—you *must* succeed—bear the present with firmness, and the future will turn out well.”

“It’s easy to say—bear the present with firmness,” cried Frank, with a tinge of bitterness in his tone. “God knows I try to do so ; but when a man is absolutely penniless, it is not so easy to be patient or resigned.”

“Ah, I feared it was so—I feared—”

“What ?” interrupted Frank, hastily. “You surprised me into a confession that I never meant to make to any man—forget it, if you please. I can imitate the wolf, and ‘die in silence,’ if need be.”

“I didn’t mean to offend you, or to annoy you,” said David, in a tone of sorrow.

“You have *not* done so, my kind, good friend,” cried Frank, warmly ; “forgive my bad temper—you will know how to make excuses for it.”

“Yes—yes,” replied David ; “but this must not be. You have made me unintention-

tionally your confidant; but you have told me no more than I had already suspected; and I say it must not be. Now lay aside your pride, I beseech you, as a warm though humble friend, and afford me one of the greatest gratifications I have ever known in my wretched life, by accepting this little loan of me."

And to Frank's intense surprise, the poor man thrust five sovereigns into his hand!

Frank could not believe his eyes—he could not suppose that David Tonks possessed such a sum in the world—and still less that he would offer it to one he had known but a few months.

"Don't say a word about it—take it," said David, eagerly, apparently in a great fright lest Frank should indignantly reject it. "I dare say you could not think that the poor penny-a-liner had such riches; but hard life and misery has taught me economy, and poor as my earnings are, I have managed to save twice that sum."

“And you offer me half of your hard earnings !” cried Frank.

And the silly boy wept like a child. David caught the infection, and his tears flowed freely too.

Laugh at them, gentle reader, if you can ; but we tell you, there was more of the diviner portion of our nature manifested in those tears than in the most heroic sternness ever displayed by sage or warrior.

“This is very foolish,” said Frank, checking himself ; “my good fellow, I can never thank you sufficiently, and never forgot your noble generosity ; but I must not avail myself of it—it would be wicked injustice to do so.”

“Oh, don’t say that,” cried David. “It would be giving me the happiest sensation I have ever known in this horrid old city. You are sure to be able to pay me again, you know.”

“Not so sure,” replied Frank, shaking his head.

“Yes—yes—quite sure,” insisted David; “and if not, why it is but ‘savings,’ I am offering you. I don’t want them—I’m living without them, you see. Don’t refuse me, or I shall be very unhappy indeed.”

“Well then,” said Frank, “I will take this one sovereign—it’s all I need, I assure you—it will last me many a day; but I must make one condition—that you will not refuse to take it back the very instant I earn anything, however small.”

“Agreed,” said David, pleased to have partly gained his object, though casting a melancholy look on the remaining four pieces of gold which he was obliged to return to the desk whence he had taken them.

And so Frank lived to be a debtor to the poor penny-a-liner, and indeed it served to support him for many a day, and it was long before he could repay the money. It was a joyful day of his life—perhaps by force of contrast the *most* joyful—when his romantic tale

appeared in the penny periodical and he received his three guineas for it.

Need we say that he hastened with an overflowing heart to restore the sovereign to David Tonks? And need we say how that restoration was the only damp cast on the heartfelt delight with which that poor fellow heard of his young friend's success? They sat long together that day and built "*chateaux-en-espagne*," for Frank's future destiny, for David Tonks's own failure after a similar commencement never even crossed *his* mind. He had faith in his young friend's genius—himself he regarded as a poor earth worm.

CHAPTER VII.

It was a warm bright afternoon in summer. The sky looked clear, even in London, and Hyde Park was thronged with the usual set of loungers in carriages, loungers on horseback, loungers on foot—it is all lounging—a dreary, heavy, monotonous way of killing time, or being killed by it. What a sameness of expression on the faces that crowd the ring, all blank and impenetrable! It is not that the heads are all empty or the minds unfurnished,

but fashion dictates immobility of expression and fashion is obeyed. The law must have been made for the blockheads of society; probably from their vast numerical influence on it. It is rigidly enforced, however, and they who break it are tatooed at once with the curt sentence pronouncing them "very odd people." An uninitiated person, or a foreigner, might suppose that one of these "odd" people was suspected of a tendency to insanity, or had offended against some moral precept, or was unacquainted with the ordinary rules of good breeding. Nothing of the kind, the good man is a little impulsive—laughs instead of smiling only when a thing amuses him, gives utterance to decided opinions when he feels them—has been known to express both astonishment and admiration—he is "such a *very* odd man." Or that good lady is a little enthusiastic, thinks Grisi divine in Norma, and actually claps her hands in approbation of the "*Trema per te*;" she dances as if she was fond of it, she can

scarcely restrain her tears when she hears or reads of a noble or generous action, she has been seen with a flush of anger on her brow, and a smile of delight on her lips—it's really a pity that "she's such a very odd person." Thus does fashionable dulness sneer down those who dare to be natural, and the man who ventures to be very intimate with one of those "odd" persons might almost as well have been seen arm-in-arm with a pick-pocket, so far as his position among a certain set is concerned.

And yet it is a pretty sight that same "ring" on a summer's afternoon. The gay and brilliant equipages, unmatched in style and number in the whole world; the beautiful faces that glance from them—the elegant dresses—the showy "cattle," and the gaudy "flunkies." And then there are the fine old trees and the bright greensward of the park, the glittering serpentine, with its tiny fleet dancing over its waters, the handsome residences of Park Lane, and the great mansion whose great tenant has,

alas, departed from it, at one end, and the glades and avenues of Kensington Gardens, with the sounds of martial music floating from their recesses at the other. And Rotten Row too—Rotten Row with the finest horses and the best riders in the world, and that most graceful and most fascinating of objects—many a lovely girl, “*en Amazone*,” mounted on an animal only less beautiful than herself, and with flowing drapery and flowing locks, with heightened colour and with sparkling eye, showing that even dull fashion cannot chain the spirits when the free bound of a high-mettled steed has warmed them into glowing.

Among the loungers on the foot-path on the day of which we are writing, was Frank Nugent. It was strange that he should find pleasure in such a scene, contrasting so strongly with the circumstances of his own lot. And yet perhaps he enjoyed it the more from that very contrast. It was like looking on fairy-land ; he had no thought of entering there and

being part of it, but it was a brilliant and an enchanting sight to look on. Had he been an actor on the scene he would have felt differently, the gold and the glitter would have been mere tinsel and spangles to him. And yet he was not philosopher enough to refrain from wishing that he could mingle in that gaudy crowd on terms of equality, with the proudest in it. Was it a paltry ambition? It was at least a natural one, and we should be sceptical of any young man's veracity who vowed that he had never felt the same.

Frank saw one or two acquaintances among the young men, who bowed to him in the usual style of perfect indifference, which would have appeared a matter of course to him formerly; but which he was half inclined to consider as slights now. He was perfectly mistaken: the indifference was real enough, but it was no more than was shown for any other acquaintance; not one of them thought about his changed prospects or ruined fortunes

—not one of them recalled even the circumstance of any change having occurred. There are no set of people who trouble themselves less with thoughts about other peoples' affairs than young men about town. It is a virtue, perhaps, this quality ; but it is by no means an unalloyed one, as it springs from selfishness, and not from principle. The same men who forgot that Frank was ruined, would merely have said, "Poor devil !" had they been reminded of it.

A very well-appointed carriage was passing Frank Nugent as he lent over the rail dividing the road from the footpath, when a lady within it bowed to him. He returned the bow immediately ; but, for the moment, thought it must have been bestowed on him by mistake.

"Who could it be?" he thought, for the carriage had passed on, and the lady's face was no longer visible to him. It did not cost him much time to run over the list of the few ladies he knew in London, for he had seen

little of society there, and had been somewhat of a book-worm at college.

“Who could it be? Let me see—I have it—yes—it was Mrs. Townley St. Leger.”

And so it was. Mrs. Townley St. Leger was the fair lady who had seen the young gentleman as he gazed abstractedly on the passing scene, and dreamt his day dreams. She was a handsome and elegantly dressed woman, of about forty. Her face had not more beauty than intellect—indeed it was the expression of the latter quality that lent the greatest charm to her countenance. *She* ventured to feel and to express her feelings; for she was one of the privileged few who could attach Fashion to her ear by first trampling on Fashion’s prejudices. Brummel did this, though with little intellectual power: she did it by the very force of intellect. She was generous and impulsive in her sentiments too; she felt keenly, and she showed it in look and action. She scorned the *laissez faire* habits of the class she belonged to;

she loved activity—activity to a good purpose. Her mind was restless, perpetually seeking fresh stimulants. She might be a little too fond of change in such matters; but she was staunch enough in real genuine feeling. And so it was that she had neither forgotten Frank Nugent nor his misfortunes, nor was she ready to dismiss the latter with the “poor devil” *insouciance*.

“I recollect her well enough now,” thought Frank Nugent to himself, “a clever, gay, excellent sort of a lady she always seemed to me. But after all, I suppose she is like the rest of this butterfly throng—she has bestowed on me her gracious nod and *voilà tout*. Long ere this, she has forgotten the very existence of such an unimportant personage as Frank Nugent.”

“Mr. Nugent,” said a silvery voice close to him.

He looked up, and behold the well-appointed carriage had come to halt beside him, to the

grievous discomfort of a plethoric old coachman outside a tremendous antique family coach, that followed it, as he had to pull up suddenly enough, to make him wheeze worse than ever, and to deepen his crimson cheeks into livid purple.

A hand was held out to Frank Nugent by the handsome Mrs. Townley St. Leger. Imagine a lady shaking hands from a carriage in Hyde Park. Could anything more unfashionably "odd" be conceived? She did hold out her hand, however, and Frank took it with delight.

"What an age since we have seen you," cried the lady. "You don't often come here, do you? at all events, this is the first time I have seen you this season."

"It is certainly the first time I have been here," returned Frank.

"And you have never called on us," said the lady, reproachfully.

Frank blushed, and began to stammer some reasons about "never calling any where now."

"But that is wrong," interrupted Mrs. Townley St. Leger, "very wrong. I accuse you of a grievous offence, and, hardened criminal, you boast of your constant persistence in that crime. You *must* call on us. Do you think we can allow you to turn anchorite yet? Wait till you have the gout and a grey head, and then we shall not trouble ourselves to draw you out of your cell."

"Indeed," said Frank, "I have no taste and no spirits for society now."

"No taste for society—*fi donc!* Don't utter such a sentiment in Hyde Park—the very stones will rise up against you. And why no taste for society? Ah, I won't hear of such treason against the world and youth. As for spirits, don't mention the word—or if you must talk of anything so dreadful, let me recommend you to that dear Lady Dundrum yonder, who is a martyr to *ennui*, and would

condole with you admirably. Don't be alarmed --remember, I am married and old—at least, a long way from my *première jeunesse*, for I must not be so inconsiderate to my own feelings as to utter that dreadful word “old.” However, you will neither compromise nor be compromised, by accepting my proposal, should any favoured damsel observe you.”

Frank smiled and expressed his delighted acceptance of the offer. The tall footman, who had stood by the carriage door during the colloquy, rattled down the steps, Frank stepped in, the tall footman jumped up beside the silver-wigged coachman, and the carriage rolled on, leaving the young author *tête-à-tête* with the gay and fascinating Mrs. Townley St. Leger.

CHAPTER VIII.

“AND why have you thus hidden yourself from the world, pray?” asked Mrs. Townley St. Leger.

“Are you not aware of my father’s death, and the state of his affairs?”

“Yes—yes—yes,” interrupted the lady, quickly ; “don’t speak of it, my dear Mr. Nugent ; but surely grief should have an end.”

“It is not grief,” replied Frank, “though I felt the loss of my father most bitterly ; but

the circumstances in which I was left preclude the possibility of my mixing in society."

"Pardon me—pardon me, my dear sir—not at all so; society is not expensive to a bachelor; he gives no entertainments, but he rewards us who do with the pleasure of his society."

"A poor return," smiled Frank.

"Not at all—an excellent one."

"Yes—but you do not quite understand me," said Frank. "I mean, that having to find the means of earning my livelihood I could not mix on terms of equality with those who were in affluence."

"Wrong again—wrong again," cried the lady; "oh, you have been very badly brought up;" and she smiled good naturedly. "Do you not know that it is forbidden to us—us of this circle (this ring of Hyde Park will represent it)—to trouble ourselves with our neighbours' affairs, especially with those of young

bachelors? Do you suppose that any one in a ball-room would take interest enough in you to enquire or care whether you were poring over Blackstone all day or lounging in dressing gown and smoking cap, and reading novels, and smoking hookahs?"

"Perhaps not—unless I was suspected of 'intentions' towards any fine lady, and then I suppose mama would be inquisitive enough."

"*Cela va sans dire*," said the lady; "but is that—"

"Oh, no—certainly not," cried Frank, eagerly.

"Well then, rest content, my friend. So long as you wear a good coat, the *grand monde* will not trouble itself about you."

"I might find even that difficult," said Frank; but he checked himself suddenly, though not before Mrs. St. Leger had caught the words and their import, and had Frank looked at her at that moment, he would have seen a momentary glance of painful interest on

her countenance, which, however, the tact of her nature dispelled in an instant. "But," continued Frank, "what shall I gain from society?"

"*Everything!*" replied the lady, emphatically, "*everything!* knowledge, better knowledge than is hidden in any book, save one. Study society, and you will know more of the world you live in, in six months, than you will gain in a lifetime of any other study."

"And to what purpose?"

"To what purpose?" cried Mrs. St. Leger, "to the highest purpose—the knowledge of mankind—the proper study of man as the wisest of poets tells us—and this knowledge of mankind leads to self-knowledge—self-knowledge to the contemplation of God!"

"But all this from fashionable life?" asked Frank, "where all is sameness."

"Do not believe it, my dear friend. They are either very shallow observers, or have never mixed in fashionable life at all, who tell

you that sameness of character is found there. I grant you, that there is a monotony of externals—custom has decreed it. But the variety beneath the surface is as great as in any other class of life. Why should it not be so? Do you suppose the people who compose the world of fashion, exempt from the ordinary passions, sentiments, desires of other people? Would it not be absurd to say so? But because the external clothing of all is alike, the superficial observer, who has not wit to penetrate below it, pronounces all sameness. Thus we are represented as monstrosities instead of ordinary men and women.”

“Perhaps you are right,” replied Frank; “but—”

“But!” smiled the lady; “now you must abandon the argument, and confess yourself convinced. Therefore you will return to society at once. Now tell me—if I am not too inquisitive—what profession do you follow? You are studying law, are you not?”

"No," said Frank, "I have abandoned that because—I am trying to write for the press now," he continued, looking becomingly modest.

"An author ! indeed !" said the lady ; " and where may we see your productions ? perhaps I have been smiling or weeping over the efforts of your muse a dozen times already."

"I am afraid not," responded Frank, with a rather melancholy smile ; "I have had little success. I know no one—"

"Stay," interrupted the lady, "will you dine with us ?"

"Thank you," said Frank, bowing.

"That is right—then you shall make me your literary confidante, and I will see whether I can be of any service to you. No thanks," she continued, as Frank began to express his gratitude ; "wait till the favor is conferred. There may be none after all, you know."

After this the conversation took an indifferent turn, and they chatted on the passing

topics of the day, and on the people whom they saw, Mrs. Townley St. Leger giving occasional graphic little sketches in the finest touches of the characters or peculiarities of the friends she saluted.

And then they left the Park, and drove to Lowndes Street, where Mrs. St. Leger lived; and here Frank renewed his acquaintance with the lady's husband.

Mr. Townley St. Leger was not a very remarkable man in any way. In person he was tall and of good figure; he had a profusion of curling, iron-grey hair, and rather extensive whiskers. His face was handsome, but not very intellectual in its cast; but his bearing and address were extremely well-bred, or what might be vulgarly called, aristocratic. At a glance, you would pronounce him a gentleman; on a short acquaintance, you would consider him an intelligent man; knowing him intimately, you would find him both sen-

sible and far better informed than the generality of his class.

He was a sportsman, and bred race-horses, but he was not a betting man. Occasionally he would back a favorite horse of his own for a moderate sum, but he was not a "book-maker," and never staked anything the loss of which would inconvenience him or cripple his resources. On the turf, therefore, he was highly respected as always running his horses "on the square"—in the polite phraseology of that curious class of society—as a man who never had been suspected of a trick or a *ruse* of any kind, and who always intended his horse to win if he could.

He was fond of hunting too, and kept an excellent stud of hunters at his country seat in Northamptonshire. His friends shared the benefit of these, for he was extremely hospitable, and always mounted as many of his guests in the country as he could. His preserves were

stocked with game, and his dogs as good as any in the county, though shooting was less in favor with him than hunting.

In London he spent his time as rationally as could be expected. He was an assiduous attendant to his Parliamentary duties, for he had a place among the collective wisdom of the country. He read also a great deal, frequented his club and the opera with praiseworthy regularity, gave excellent dinners, had no particular vices, and was altogether a good specimen of an independent gentleman of the 19th century.

He welcomed Frank cordially, for he had not forgotten him, and happened to remember the peculiar circumstances of his father's failure and death.

Mrs. St. Leger laughingly explained to him how she had caught Frank on his very first day of venturing into the charmed circle of gay life, and had seized on him, and carried

him off in triumph. And so in good time they sat down a smiling *trio* to an excellent little dinner.

In the evening Frank fulfilled his promise of making Mrs. Townley St. Leger the confidante of his pursuits and wishes. He told her without disguise all that he had done and suffered of late, and exactly how he was now situated. The lady listened with painful interest, and more than once her eyes were filled with tears, less at what Frank actually told her, than at what she felt that he was slurring over with the tact and good feeling of a gentleman—for what gentleman could “hawk his sorrows as beggars do their sores?”

She saw that Frank’s first great want was immediate aid. She promised herself to devise means of affording him this without wounding his feelings. The next thing was to procure him such literary introductions as would give him a fair chance of making his

way in the career he had chosen if Heaven had given him sufficient abilities to carry him forward.

This latter she at once promised to do as early as possible; and when Frank walked towards his Pentonville garret that evening, it was with a lightened heart at the brighter prospect that seemed opening to him, and with something of a belief in Mrs. Townley St. Leger's being closely allied with the angels.

It is a long walk from Belgravia to Pentonville, and Frank Nugent's purse was not full enough to enable him prudently to charter a cab, so he tramped on along Piccadilly, through Leicester Square and Cranbourne Street, and then diverged to the left, through some of the "short cuts" leading to New Oxford Street. The night was dark and gusty, and seemed to portend a storm, but no rain had yet fallen. Frank paid little attention to the weather—he was too much absorbed in his own reflections.

Equally inattentive was he to the footsteps that dogged him at a short distance behind him, though had he once observed the individual who so pertinaciously followed him, he might have felt a little curiosity, if not alarm. A more wretched or repulsive looking vagabond could hardly be conceived than the sturdy Irish beggar who thus kept him in view. His clothes were a mass of dirty rags, adhering together in some mysterious way, though they looked as if a shake would send them to pieces. His hat was a battered old beaver with half the rim gone and the crown torn. His toes protruded from his boots, his beard had been uncut for many a day, and his high cheek-bones and sunken eyes, with bloodshot lids, made his physiognomy as repulsive as his dress. He was a gaunt, but powerfully built man, and he carried a thick short stick which looked a formidable weapon in such hands.

“Arrah wont you besthow a thrifle for the love of God,” he cried drawing near to Frank,

and attempting a beggar's whine, which ill suited his deep rough voice.

Frank started, for he had not noticed the man's approach.

"A thrifle your honour for a poor stharvin sinner," he whirled again.

"I've nothing for you," said Frank, "I'm as poor as yourself, my good man."

"Sure it's jokin yer honor is; the devil a bit or sup have I had these three days."

Frank thrust his hand in his pocket, and pulled out a sixpence, which he gave the man and walked on again.

"The blessin of St. Patrick on your honor," said the beggar, in the same diabolical whine.

Frank walked on, and still the beggar followed him. At length the young man roused himself out of another reverie he had fallen into, to see whether he was going the right road. It was certainly not a pleasant one, for it was a filthy ill-paved, and worse lighted

street where he found himself. He must have taken the wrong turning, for he certainly had no business to be where he was. Should he go forward or turn back? The latter seemed the best course, for he was nearer to that end of the street, and might find the name of it at the corner. He turned therefore and retraced his steps. The sturdy beggar who had watched him, slunk aside into the entrance of an alley to let him pass. Frank did not observe him; in another instant the beggar stepped out, and with a whirl of his stick dealt Frank so terrific a blow on the head, that with a stifled groan he fell heavily to the ground.

The beggar rushed upon him, and rifled his pockets, cursing his "bad-luck" in finding so little in them. There was, however, a little gold watch which had belonged to Frank's mother. This the fellow seized with delight, and having searched every other pocket, he left him, muttering—

"I'll learn him to give a christian a dirty

sixpence, the spalpeen." And so saying he darted down the alley.

"Holloa ! come I say—get up," cried a policeman, passing almost half an hour afterwards, "get up you vagabond," and he gave him a kick with his foot, "well he just *is* drunk." Then he stooped down and turned his "bull's eye" light on to Frank's prostrate form.

"Whew !" he said, "it's a gentleman. And dash me if I think he's drunk either. No—I'm blessed if here isn't blood."

Upon making the discovery he pulled out his rattle and sprung it. In any other locality this would have produced a crowd in a few minutes, even at that hour of the night ; but in that favored region it had the contrary effect—every denizen there who heard the sound muttered "police," and trembled and stayed within doors, lest *he* should be "nabbed," for some of his own peccadilloes, with which his conscience smote him. Another policeman,

however, was soon on the spot, and helped the first one to carry poor Frank to the Charing Cross Hospital.

"A devil of a thump," said the surgeon in attendance, "hope he may get over it," and he set very professionally about examining Frank's wounds.

"Can't find anything to tell us who he is," said the policeman, who had been searching his pockets, "linen's marked F. N. ; and here is a pocket-book, but there's no name in it. No money of course—that's gone to the fellow who floored him."

"Well—well—he *may* get better in a few days, and tell us who he is himself," said the surgeon, "and if he does'nt, I suppose you'll advertise him."

"I suppose so—but I must go and report the case to the inspector. So, good night, sir."

"He'll die, I think," said the surgeon to his assistant, when they were alone. "It's a pity too, for he's a fine lad."

CHAPTER IX.

WHAT an excellent little soul was Fanny Marsden ! Always employed to some useful purpose from morn till night. At one time she was darning stockings and socks for all the little household ; at another she was deep in the mysteries of pie-crust or plum-pudding ; sometimes she was instructing her younger sisters, and at others labouring to instruct herself. Never an idle hour in the day. To tell the truth, the pleasantest portion of the four-and-

twenty hours to her was—though Fanny would'nt have owned such a thing for the world—the time when Frank was employed in drumming Latin into Master Tommy, and French into his two sisters.

During these two hours, Fanny always sat in the little front parlour, which served for the school-room, and worked hard with her needle. But it is a very serious fact that Fanny made so many false stitches, and sewed so many buttons on in wrong places, and darned so many buttonholes together in mistake for rents during these two hours, that it gave her a vast deal of trouble to undo all her work afterwards, and do it over again. Perhaps Fanny listened too much to the French lesson, and, indeed, she wished very much to acquire a knowledge of that language, and thought it rather hard that her mother had never let the garrets to teach *her* French in former days. But in Fanny's school-days the Marsdens lived more humbly than now, for Mr. Marsden had not then hit

upon a certain method of supplying the domestic exchequer, which he had since followed with great success.

Frank was very conscientious as a teacher. He laboured hard to drill the necessary knowledge into the little animals he had to instruct, and he displayed great patience and good temper. His pupils were not deficient in natural abilities—especially Master Tommy, who was a very sharp lad, but a great rogue in his small way. His *escapades* afforded much amusement to Frank, who always looked towards Fanny as he smiled, and then Fanny smiled too, and Fanny blushed. But Frank never conversed with Fanny till the two hours' lessons were over, and then he certainly never left the room without addressing a few words to her: and oh, how Fanny looked forward to that time! She trembled a great deal, too, at the idea of it; but it was very pleasant, notwithstanding. Frank had such a nice voice, and such a pleasing address, and was so easy

in his manner, and never paid her stupid compliments, like that horrid Mr. Biddle.

Frank liked his little garrets—they were always so neat, and so beautifully clean. Not that he was the most “tidy” of men, (to use a good house-wife’s favourite expression) on the contrary, he had an awkward habit of throwing things about—his coat here, his waiscoat there, his boots somewhere else, and his slippers anywhere. But, somehow or other, they always returned to their right places—the slippers, especially, were always just where he liked them to be when he returned home tired. And then his papers were never disturbed—a great advantage; for what can be more distressing to a literary man’s temper than to find all his memoranda and loose papers—left by him in apparent negligence, but in real order for use—all gathered up in neat packages, for the sake of ‘tidiness?’ not to mention their being occasionally appropriated to lighting the fire. Imagine the long

conceived and laboriously worked out plan of a five-act drama thrust between the bars of the grate, and ruthlessly consumed by the slovenly maid-of-all-work.

Nothing of the kind ever happened to the labours of Frank's brain. Whether the world or himself would always have been sufferers by such an event, we won't presume to guess. It was astonishing, too, how clean the crochet anti-maccassar of the old easy-chair, that had been added to his stock of furniture, always looked. Really that stupid looking girl must be a very good servant, after all, thought Frank. Oh, mole-eyed Frank Nugent! Did stupid servant girls ever keep putting clean anti-maccassars into bachelors' rooms? Did they ever leave literary men's papers alone? Did they ever put their slippers so carefully every day into the very right place? And above all, did they ever put small bouquets of fresh flowers to ornament the mantel-piece, and per-

fume the poor garret? Oh, dull witted Frank, to think of stupid servant girls!

“You don’t speak French, I think?” said Frank to poor Fanny, one day after the lessons were over.

“Oh no—not at all. I never learnt it;” replied Fanny, in her usual tremor on hearing Frank’s “nice” voice.

“Should you not like to acquire it?” he asked.

“I should like it of all things,” said Fanny—“but —.”

“I shall be happy to teach you if you would like to learn of so bad a master,” said Frank.

“Oh, thank you—I should like so very much: but I’m afraid—you know—I’m afraid you’d find me very stupid.”

“I don’t believe that at all,” cried Frank, gallantly. “On the contrary, I feel sure that you would be a most creditable scholar. Will you try a lesson now?”

Fanny expressed her gratitude and delight; but really the agitation into which she was thrown by the proposal, made her quite giddy. Frank, however, set all that down to the score of natural bashfulness. Silly Frank Nugent! and *you* talked about a woman's heart as if you understood it. You had not even learnt its alphabet.

Frank drew a chair to the table and sat down by the side of Fanny Marsden. Then he opened the French grammar with the coolness of an old pedagogue about to instruct a dozen booby boys. Then he looked at Fanny, and Fanny stared at the table as if she had discovered something wonderfully attractive in the old stained table cover. Then Frank said in a most professor-like tone:—

“The first thing to be done is to get the alphabet correctly. Now suppose you repeat each letter after me, A. B. C., &c.” And he brought out each one in his most sonorous tone,

while Fanny responded in a faint whisper, that a fairy lover, in a fairy moonlight night might have envied.

“But you pronounce remarkably well,” said Frank, putting his head very close indeed to Fanny’s face, to catch the low sounds. One of her curls actually tickled his cheek—he scratched the place, and thought it was a fly! Poor Fanny!

“Now we will come to the articles. You see there are two articles in French, the definite and the indefinite, &c., &c.” And after a moment he exclaimed.

“But you understand them—you know them already. I thought you told me that you had never learnt French.”

“No—but—I have heard you teaching the children, and I recollected —.”

“Bless me!” exclaimed Frank; “you have an excellent memory; and I had no idea that you paid such attention to our lessons. I

thought you were too much occupied with your industrious needle, which I always see going so fast."

Ah! if you did but know, Mr. Frank Nugent, what a desperately large number of buttons had been misplaced at these particular times, the fact would afford you some slight clue to the true nature of Miss Fanny's occupation.

Fanny declared that of course she couldn't help hearing, and of course she tried to remember what she heard, and so forth; but the sly little damsel never told him how she used to go upstairs into her own little room at night and burn quantities of mama's "dips," in poring over the French grammar, and mastering, and getting by heart the lesson Frank had given her younger sisters in the morning.

"Well, now before we go any further, I think you had better tell me how far you *have* learnt," said Frank, smiling.

“ I think I know the verbs,” replied Fanny, very modestly.

“ Indeed !” cried Frank ; “ then, the fact is, you have learnt just as much as I have yet been able to teach your little sisters ?”

“ I *think* so,” said Fanny, again, very mildly.

“ Then I’m sure you deserve to acquire the language soon,” added Frank, “ for your quickness and industry.”

Quickness ! and industry !—not very romantic praises to apply to a young lady, but they gratified Fanny, tremendously, nevertheless : she looked up at him, one little, timid, thankful glance, that ought to have gone through and through the young tutor ; but Frank only looked at the French grammar, and turned over another page. Then he set her some lessons to learn, and exercises to write, and left her in a high state of delight, which she evinced in the very feminine way of bursting into tears as soon as he had quitted the room.

“Hoity-toity ! what’s the matter, Fan ?” asked her mother, coming in.

“Nothing,” said Fanny, wiping her eyes very fast, and stitching away as if she were doing a needlework race.

“But what are you crying for ?”

“Nothing—only Mr. Nugent is going to teach me French,” faltered Fanny.

“And very kind of him to do it,” said Mrs. Marsden ; “why, you’re not going to cry about that, I hope. Don’t you want to learn ?”

“Oh, yes, indeed, I’m so pleased,” cried Fanny, eagerly.

“Well, it’s a odd way you have of shewing it—that I *must* say,” rejoined Mrs. Marsden.

“What a strange girl it is !”

And she departed into the lower regions—that is, the back kitchen.

“What a clever little girl,” said Frank, in his own room, “and how fond of information !”

Fond of fiddlesticks, you solid old professor. Do you suppose she would have cared a button for the French grammar and your prosy lessons in it, if you had been a grey-headed old *émigré* instead of a good-looking lad, though the former would have had a deuced deal better accent to bestow on her than your own conceited self?

Such were the state of affairs in the Pentonville household about the time that Frank Nugent fell in with Mrs. Townley St. Leger. His absence from home the whole evening was a matter of comment.

“I *do* think it’s the first time as ever he’s been out the whole evening,” said Mrs. Marsden; “aint it, Fanny?”

Fanny said—

“Yes.”

“I wonder where he can be?” Mrs. Marsden said again.

“Out on a spree p’raps,” suggested Master Tommy, with a grin.

“How dare you talk like that, sir?” said his sister, indignantly.

“Well, the child didn’t mean any harm, Fanny, I des-say,” remonstrated Mrs. M., “though it’s very vulgar to use those ’orrid words like ‘spreed’ and ‘lark,’ and you ought to know better, sir.”

“Pa uses ’em,” said Master Tommy, surlyly.

Fanny looked at Mrs. Marsden, and Mrs. Marsden looked at Fanny, and the latter told him very gravely, that there was a great difference between grown men like his papa and little boys like himself, to which Tommy replied—

“Oh, yes! it’s all very fine, but I saw you winking at ma.”

A knock was heard at the door.

“There he is, I suppose,” observed Mrs. Marsden.

“That’s papa’s knock,” said Fanny; *she* knew the difference.

“Well,” said Mr. Marsden, sober to-day, “how are you all?”

“Very well, my dear,” replied his wife; “but Mr. Nugent aint come home yet.”

“What of that? it’s only ten o’clock. Besides, I suppose he’s old enough to take care of himself, aint he?”

“Oh, yes, my dear; but you see it’s the first evening he’s been out since he’s lived in the house.”

“Very well—so he’s having a spree now, perhaps,” said Mr. Marsden, and Master Marsden grinned with delight, and poked Fanny in the side. “Perhaps he’ll come home ‘screwed,’ ” he suggested.

“That I’m sure he wouldn’t,” said Fanny, hastily—“he’s too much of a gentleman for *that*.”

“Umph—gammon,” said Mr. Marsden, and looked sulky.

Fanny recollected that she had “put her

foot in it," as her father would have said, and felt awkward in consequence.

The hours went on—eleven—twelve—no Frank Nugent came. Mr. Marsden thought nothing of it; Mrs. Marsden considered it odd; Miss Fanny deemed it alarming.

"Well, there's no need for any one to sit up, you know," said Mr. Marsden; "he's got a latch key hasn't he?"

"Yes," replied his wife.

"Then come to bed. If he's such a very steady man, you know, and is so sure to come home without being the least bit screwed, of course there can't be any fear about his putting out the light safe, and not setting fire to the house, eh, Fanny?"

Fanny pretended to be very busy packing up the contents of her work-box, and made a great deal more fuss about it than was at all necessary. But at last she was obliged to follow her parents and to go to bed.

Mr. and Mrs. Marsden were soon in the arms

of Morpheus ; but poor Fanny tossed and tumbled about in her bed ; and then lay listening intently with hushed breath for the footsteps coming along the street. At one time there was a disturbance in it—some midnight brawl—she crept out of bed, and peered through the window panes to see if Frank were in it. At another time she heard footsteps approaching the door, they came up the steps—and then there was the turning of a latch-key, and the fizzing of a lucifer in the hall, and a slight cough—it was only Mr. Biddle.

Several cabs rattled along. One of them drew up close by—was it at their house ? Again she crept out of bed and looked into the street. No—the cab was drawn up next door.

Some more footsteps were approaching the house. They did not sound like his—they were very irregular—now a shuffle and now two or three quick steps. They were those of a drunken man. They stopped at the house. They came up to the door. There was a great deal of

fumbling at the lock with a latch key again. Could it be Frank? and could he be intoxicated? She hardly knew which to hope. It would be a relief to know that he was safe—but how shocking if he were tipsy!

The lucifers wouldn't light—lucifers wont when you rub the wrong end. A very "groggy" muttering smote her ear. Then the lucifer was rubbed again, and now it "fizzed," and some one said, "that's the ticket my hearty." It was Mr. Spriggett, fresh from the Coal Hole.

Many another hour did Fanny listen. Several times she got out of bed with the determination of rousing her parents and telling them that Frank had not yet returned; but she dared not. Besides, what would be the use? Her father was too selfish to trouble himself about the matter, and even if he had been willing to do so what could he do? Where could he go to search or make enquiries? They did not know the name or address of any

friend Frank Nugent possessed. There was no help for it, but to wait patiently and hope—hope.

It is wearing work, staying awake all night. Poor little Fanny found it so in spite of the anxiety that supported her. By degrees a lassitude that she fought against in vain came over her, and trying hard *not* to sleep she fell into a deep slumber.

At that moment Frank Nugent was lying between life and death, with his broken head in blood-stained bandages.

CHAPTER X.

“Good day Mr. Tonks,” said a police serjeant, at the door of the station in Bow Street, to our friend David, who was approaching him.

“Good day Mr. Spinks,” said David, in return, “any news for me to day?”

“Well—not much, I’m afraid,” replied the policeman, “the cases were very dull to-day, before his worship—only fit for the regular reporters. There wasn’t a joke made all the morning as I can recollect—not one.”

"That's a pity," said David, "it's quite uncommon too, isn't it? For my part I don't think I ever went into any sort of court, from the Court of Chancery to the police-court without hearing a few jokes made. They're not always very funny—are they? But you generally have a few, such as they are."

"And quite right too," said the policeman, "in the proper place—but I don't like a laugh to get about when I have an old hand as I want to get committed, because the justices are apt to get too good-tempered over it, and let the fellow off cheap."

"I see," replied David; "well then, you can't give me a help to-day—no accident or anything of that sort."

"I'm afraid there's been none," said the man in blue, as though the absence of accidents was a thing to be lamented. "Stay, though," he cried, after a moment's consideration. "Yes, there *was* a case last night, leastways this morning, as would suit you."

“What was it?” asked David.

“Well, it was a gentleman as was found by No. 86 of our division on the pavement in Little Timothy Street, in the Rookery. At first 86 thought he was drunk, but he stooped down and looked at him with his lantern, and then he found that he’d had a terrible thump on the side of the head from some blackguard or other, and was quite lifeless like, and bleeding horridly.”

“You don’t mean to say he was dead?” asked David.

“No; he *wasn’t* dead but he *may* be soon, for it’s a very bad case. 86 sprang his rattle, and up comes 124, and they lifted him up and carried him off to the hospital.”

“That’ll do for me,” said David, professionally, and taking out his note-book to make the necessary memoranda; “but it’s a sad case too, is’nt it? I suppose you found out who he is.”

“No we didn’t—can’t find out anyhow.

He had a pocket-book ; but there was no name in it, and his linen was only marked with his initials F. N."

" Ah ! it'll make a capital 'mysterious case,' " said David, again thinking of his calling, and then relapsing into his mere humanity, he said, " Poor fellow though ! how shocking ! and fancy his friends, his wife, or his family !"

" I don't think he's likely to have them," said the policeman, " leastways, he's rather young for that, I fancy, from his description : here it is."

David read—

" A young man about 22 or 23 years of age, dark hair, pale complexion, about 5 feet 10 or 11 inches, and slender—dressed in black surtout, brown grey trowsers and waistcoat, black necktie, &c."

" Holloa !—stay !" cried David, suddenly, " what's the name ?—I mean what are the initials ? . F. N ! Where did you say he is ?"

“Charing Cross Hospital,” replied the policeman, astonished at David’s eagerness and agitation.

“I must go and see—good-bye,” cried David; and he hurried off as hard as he could go to the hospital.

David Tonks was not unknown at the hospital, or at any other hospital in London, for David’s profession made him cultivate the acquaintance of all the hall-porters, and other minor officials at these establishments, so that he might gain from them the information touching any new “accident case” brought in, which would serve as a newspaper paragraph. It is true that David’s information, thus acquired, was not always the most perfect or accurate—but who expects accuracy in a newspaper report of anything? He might as well study a popular history in search of truth! So long as the cases were genuine, and had something about them to give interest to them, it was all that could be expected, and

all that the most exacting of newspaper-venders could desire. Set off with a few stock phrases of the penny-a-liners, the hospital cases became quite exciting. For example—a man is brought into the hospital with a broken head, the result of some street row, and the next day we learn from the papers that “the neighbourhood of Little Britain was thrown into a state of consternation yesterday morning by, &c.,” though the neighbourhood of Little Britain was only made aware of its own state of consternation by reading the said account of it in the papers.

David Tonks, therefore, had little difficulty in gaining admission to the ward where Frank Nugent was lying, and saw, with real consternation and sorrow, that it was indeed his young friend. He made many anxious enquiries as to the extent of the injuries, and their probable result; but the former was described to him in extra professional terms, which puzzled rather than instructed him,

while as to the probability of Frank's recovery, the surgeon's assistant declined giving any more explicit opinions than might be conveyed in a profound shake of the head. This made David very miserable, and he felt very helpless. He did not know what to do—he wandered about outside the hospital with no settled purpose: he never thought of going to write out his usual paragraphs for the papers—he ate nothing—he did nothing. Suddenly he be-thought himself of a duty he ought to perform—to go to Frank's lodgings, and tell the people there what had happened. What a fool he was not to think of it before! What was the use of roaming about doing nothing, instead of performing a piece of duty like that! He had Frank's address—of course he had. He would start off at once to Pentonville.

So David looked out for a "Favourite" omnibus to carry him to the Angel at Islington, near which time-honoured hostelry lie the classic regions of Pentonville. He then

searched for and found, without much difficulty, Charles Street, and at No. 98, he gave a modest "tat-tat."

"Does Mr. Nugent live here?" asked David of the stupid servant-girl.

"No he don't," replied the girl, with a little touch of indignation in the tone of her words. "Mr. Marsden *lives* here; but Mr. New-gent *lodges* here."

"I beg your pardon," said David, smiling, "yes—that is what I meant."

A third person appeared in the scene—it was Fanny Marsden, in a half-concealed tremor of agitation.

"Were you asking for Mr. Nugent?" said Fanny, politely.

"I was asking if he lodged here," replied David, lifting his hat quite gallantly, "not asking *for* him—for, unfortunately, I know that he is not here."

"Oh dear me, what is it sir? is it anything dreadful?" cried Fanny, quite losing her self-

command in the agitation caused by David's tone of sorrow. "Pray come in, sir," she continued as David seemed reluctant to talk in the open doorway.

Fanny led the way into the front parlour, where she begged David to take a seat, and then she ran for her mother.

"Law bless me ! what is it, sir, about Mr. New-gent ?" cried the good woman, coming in with her daughter.

"I thought it my duty to come and tell you what I know, as you might probably be in some anxiety about Mr. Nugent," said David. "I only became acquainted with his accident by chance.

"Accident ! oh dear, is he run over ?" exclaimed Fanny.

"Be quiet, my dear, and let's hear what the gentleman has to tell us," remonstrated her mother.

"Why, you see," said David ; "I hap-

pened to hear at the Bow Street Police Station—”

“ I hope he ain’t taken up for anything,” parenthesised Mrs. Marsden.

“ I happened to hear,” continued David, “ of a serious accident having occurred the previous night to a young gentleman who had been knocked down and nearly murdered.”

“ Not *quite* ?” asked Fanny.

“ Not *quite* ?” answered David ; “ but almost. “ The description of the young man reminded me of Mr. Nugent, and I went to the hospital to see if it could be he, and you may judge how shocked I was to find that it was !”

“ But he isn’t dead—is he ?” asked Fanny again, in a half-stifled voice.

“ No,” said David, “ he’s not dead.”

“ But is he dying ?” asked Fanny.

“ I don’t know,” replied David. “ I hope not.”

“ What do you *think*, sir ?” asked Fanny again.

“Is there any hopes?” said Mrs. Marsden, who had crossed her hands, and sat a picture of resignation.

David shook his head—just as David had seen the surgeon’s assistant shake *his* head, and just as people in general, who don’t want to commit themselves by any words at all, generally shake *their* heads.

“How very shocking!” sobbed Fanny.

“Quite a judgment!” said Mrs. Marsden, though why it was a judgment, or how, or for what, the good lady hadn’t the slightest idea in the world.

“Couldn’t we do anything for him?” asked Fanny, through her tears.

“I’m afraid not,” replied David, in a lugubrious tone.

“If I could make him any jelly, or anything of that sort, I’m sure I’ll do it with all the pleasure in life,” said Mrs. Marsden.

David could scarcely forbear from smiling in the midst of his sorrow, at the idea of a man,

senseless and stunned, requiring jellies, or "anything of that sort." But he expressed his sense of the good lady's benevolence, and only intimated that he hoped Mr. Nugent might live to benefit by it.

Then they all three sat still and looked at the floor; and then David rose and departed, and Fanny got up to let him out, and in the hall she said to him in a very low tone, and with a great deal of hesitation.

"I suppose I *couldn't* see him, sir, could I?"

"Well," said David, quite puzzled, "I — I — that is — don't you think you'd better *not*? It's a very shocking sight you know."

"Is it?" said Fanny, but feeling quite a horrible curiosity on the subject, as if she fancied that she could tell so much better by seeing him, whether he would live or not.

David assured her that even if she could gain admission to Frank, it would be a very sad sight for her, and shock her very much, without doing him any good. So Fanny was

convinced, but she hinted that she didn't know how they were to hear news of Frank at all. So David promised to enquire every day, and Fanny promised to meet David Tonks every other day at Charing Cross, to hear the news: and when this arrangement had been made, Fanny's heart felt much lighter, and David Tonks departed.

It was surely a highly improper arrangement! A young lady of eighteen to meet a man of thirty every second day by appointment in the street—how shocking! and to enquire about the health of another young gentleman of two or three and twenty, who was lying ill, and who wasn't related to him at all—horrible!

But the truth is—poor Fanny had not been duly instructed in all the requirements of that very easily offended, and very hard to be propitiated, goddess—Propriety. She was apt, therefore, to consult only her own feelings, with a sort of reliance that they would never

betray her into anything very wrong. Perhaps Fanny was not very far from the truth in her ideas. At all events, she kept her appointments with David Tonks most religiously, and had the gratification of learning from him that the symptoms were each time more favorable, till at length it was considered that the chances were very firmly in favor of his recovery.

In the meanwhile, another person had been anxious about Frank. This was Mrs. Townley St. Leger. In fulfilment of her promise, she had written to him to ask him to meet some literary friend of hers at her house, and she was surprised to find that he neither came nor answered her note. At first she was disposed to be *piqued*, but on reflection she felt sure that something must be amiss, and therefore resolved to call and ascertain the fact. So she ordered her carriage, and bade her astonished coachman drive to Pentonville—Charles Street, No. 98. The coachman thought it very hard that he should be supposed to know anything about

such a place as Pentonville, and still less of Charles Street therein; but he obeyed orders by driving down the New Road, and asking a policeman to direct him.

Great was the excitement produced in Charles Street by the appearance in it of Mrs. St. Leger's carriage. The horses, the harness, the tall footman, the burly coachman, and the coachman's silver wig, all came in for their share of surprise and admiration. As for Mrs. St. Leger herself, it was currently debated among the servants-of-all-work in the street, whether she was some foreign empress, or the queen's mother, or the Duchess of Sutherland, or a lady from Ashley's Theatre.

The tall footman jumped down as the carriage drew up at No. 98, and dealt such a thunder of blows on the little door, as made it shiver, (or, as Mrs. Marsden observed, "enough to bring the house down.") The stupid servant opened the door, and seeing the tall footman and the grand equipage, she first stood still,

and stared, open-mouthed, unheeding the enquiry addressed to her, and then she turned round, and ran away into the house, crying—

“ Oh, please, mum—oh, please, mum !”

Mrs. Marsden came rushing up from the kitchen in a tremendous flurry, and Mrs. Marsden’s cap, which always seemed to sympathize with her state of mind, fluttered about in the wildest style ; and then Mrs. Marsden asked the tall footman, what did he please to want, but before he could answer, Mrs. St. Leger begged her to come to the carriage. And then tremendous was the surprise of Mrs. Marsden when she heard that the owner of that splendid carriage (“ as handsome as the Lord Mayor’s,” as she afterwards declared,) had come to see “ Mr. New-gent, as occupied her garrets, and taught French and Latin.”

With an enormous deal of circumlocution, and an incessant interlarding of—“ yes, mum,” and “ yes, my lady,” (for not being sure of the lady’s title, she thought it better to give both,

so as to be right *sometimes*), she continued to make Mrs. Townley St. Leger acquainted with the melancholy situation of poor Frank, and as soon as the visitor had gained that information, she bid Mrs. Marsden good day, and drove with all speed to Charing Cross.

When Fanny came home that day, *she* also was surprised at the description of Mrs. St. Leger and her equipage. Mrs. Marsden described the lady to be as beautiful as she was “grand,” and then Fanny became very anxious to know whether she was young, and whether her mama thought she was married—questions which Mrs. Marsden thought trivial and irrelevant, and therefore avoided giving any decided answers to them.

So Fanny was left pleased and puzzled—disappointed and agitated. What could it all mean? She had only heard of two friends of Frank Nugent—one was a very shabby and poor-looking man, and the other a very magni-

ficently apparelled and apparently very rich lady.

She did not sleep that night as well as she ought to have done, considering that she had heard that Frank Nugent was out of all danger.

CHAPTER XI.

WE have another family to introduce to our readers, and as we owe them an *amende* for taking them so often into questionable society and localities, we will promise that our new acquaintances shall be perfectly unexceptionable in birth, breeding, and position.

Colonel Danvers was a member of one of the best families in England. He came of a military stock too, for his father had been a general in the army, and his grandfather also.

Colonel Danvers was an only son, but he was not on that account considered exempt from pursuing the family profession of arms. From his childhood he was taught to look forward to the life of a soldier as his destined career, and it would have been strange if he had felt no enthusiasm for it, surrounded as he was by those who sneered at and depreciated every other earthly calling. His mother was a soldier's daughter, and not without her fondness for the military profession, but in her there was also much gentleness of nature and liberality of mind, so that she by no means looked upon all civilians as an inferior order of animals to their belligerent fellow men. Her husband thought this a weakness—but a pardonable one in a woman. and loved his wife as she deserved, for she was a noble-hearted lady, and “worthy a brave man's liking.”

At eighteen young Danvers received a commission in a foot regiment. He would have preferred a cavalry one, but his father, who

knew the army well and wished to make his son a real working soldier, feared that the gay dissipations of a light cavalry corps might seduce his son from the path he had chalked out for him, and make him a mere "feather-bed" soldier, instead of a true warrior. Shortly after his joining the ——th it was ordered out to India. The young ensign was not displeased at this—his father was delighted—his mother was inconsolable.

"Can he not exchange into some other regiment and remain in England?" she asked.

"He *could* but he *wont*, my good wife," replied her husband, "why should he?"

"But why should he go away?" she asked.

"To see service," was the answer.

"Can he not see it in England?"

"No—not such service as will make him what I wish to see him—a first-rate soldier."

"But the climate is so dangerous—the climate of India," suggested the mother.

“It didn’t hurt *me* during the ten years I served in it, and it need not hurt him if he is steady,” replied the father.

“But war is expected there, is it not?” asked the anxious mother, after a pause.

“I hope so,” was the brief reply.

“And your son’s life might be sacrificed in it!” exclaimed Mrs. Danvers in a tone of reproach.

“My dear wife, a soldier must not shrink from his duty from any fear of possible results,” said the general firmly, but temperately.

“No!” she answered, “not from his duty, I grant you; and dearly as I love my son, I should be the last to wish him to do so, whatever might be the danger he incurred in performing it. But surely there is a difference between following the dictates of duty and *seeking* for duties which are perilous.”

“He is not doing so,” replied her husband, “he is simply following his duty in going wherever his regiment is ordered—it would be

an avoidance—in *my* opinion a cowardly avoidance—of duty if he endeavoured to escape the fancied dangers of an Indian climate, or the real ones of an Indian war, by exchanging into another regiment.”

The lady was half convinced of the truth of her husband’s remarks, but if her simple reason was satisfied, her maternal anxiety was not lessened. However, she knew that it would be useless to attempt further opposition, since her son’s inclination went hand-in-hand with his father’s wishes.

And so young Danvers went to India, and served there ten years, and fought bravely, and was several times mentioned in dispatches, and rose in his regiment and became as his father wished, an admirable soldier.

On his return to England, he exchanged into a light cavalry regiment, and was soon again abroad, but this time it was only to take part in European warfare. In fact to be one

of the envied actors in the glorious drama of Waterloo.

After this event he was quartered in various garrison towns in the United Kingdom, and in one of these places, or rather at a country house in the neighbourhood of it, he became acquainted with lady Emily Beauvale, daughter of the Earl and Countess of Marrable.

Lady Emily was very beautiful and very accomplished, very vain and very weak. But Major Danvers only saw the two first qualities, and fell in love with them accordingly. It is true that the two other qualities were, at least, as apparent to all disinterested observers as the more endearing ones; but the poor soldier was too much blinded by the brilliance of Lady Emily's personal charms, and too much dazzled by her accomplishments, to be able to see clearly or reflect calmly, on anything connected with her ladyship. He was very desperately bitten by the tender passion indeed—as soldiers are apt to be: and as he

was a handsome fellow, with four thousand a year, (for his father was now dead) and a majority in one of the gayest of light cavalry corps, Lady Emily smiled on his suit. So that in due time, Lady Emily Beauvale became Lady Emily Danvers, and the major was left to find out all the little deficiencies in the fair lady's character, that he had previously overlooked, under the strong light thrown by matrimony on such a subject.

From being a vain and weak girl, Lady Emily Danvers became a still vainer and weaker woman. Fashion was her goddess, and never had that changeable divinity a more devoted worshipper than in her. Her life was one incessant sacrifice to the altar of Fashion. Without the ability to lead Fashion or Fashion's slaves, or the boldness to set her decrees occasionally at naught, she was content to drag on her existence in the daily and hourly pursuits of the same pleasures, and among the same scenes. The only little excite-

ment she allowed herself was a slight mild indisposition occasionally—not a serious illness, for that would have been shocking and vulgar—but a head-ache, a cold, a lassitude, or something of the kind, for which she had always the most euphonious of French names. On these occasions, she remained at home, refused invitations, declined visits, save from a very favoured few, and these she received in her boudour, reclining on a *chaise-longue*, with a little ebony table by her side, for her white hand to rest on, and also to hold half a dozen fascinating little *flacons* of rare essences, with the *persiennes* closed, and the rose-coloured satin curtains diffusing the most becoming blush or tint over her pale features.

Colonel Danvers had two children by his wife—a son and a daughter. The former he, of course, trained to the family profession. Lionel Danvers was a fine youth; but he had imbibed from his parents some of the least agreeable qualities of each. Thus he had the warmth

of temper of his father, though, in him, it degenerated into violence, from which his father was free; and he had a considerable share of his mother's vanity. He had a great fancy for the army; but it was less from the more noble and lofty appreciation of a soldier's calling, than from a love of gay friends, gay society, gay dress, and gay habits. He thought too much of the scarlet and gold lace in his dreams of military ambition—and a man who does that may fight bravely enough when fighting is the order of the day; but he can never be a great general. He may be a Murat—but not a Wellington or a Napoleon.

Lionel Danvers entered the army in the “piping time of peace,” and lived as most young officers do in such times. He had wished to enter the Guards; but this his father would not allow, as he entertained his own father's notions on the subject, and wished his son to see active service. So Lionel joined a dragoon regiment, and spent three years in

India ; after which he came to enjoy the delights of country quarters in England. He became very fond of racing too, and made a book with the greatest regularity on every event of consequence—he kept a couple of hunters, drove tandem, and lived on the whole as “fast” as he could—which means about three times as fast as he could properly afford.

Flora Danvers, the daughter, was a beautiful girl and a finer character in every way than her brother, or either of her parents. Not that she was free from faults. Who forgets Pope’s ungallant sentiment—

Perfection in the world to find
In vain you’ll seek—much less in womankind.

But though far from perfection, Flora Danvers was as excellent a specimen of womanhood as one can hope to see in these latter days. To commence with her person. She

was tall, graceful, queen-like in form—she had a foot and hand to swear by, so perfect were they in shape—her face was oval, the forehead beautifully proportioned, and the head compact, not large, (how detestable is a big-headed woman!) her skin was white, perfectly and transparently white, without a particle more of colour in her cheeks than elsewhere. This was a peculiarity, but the effect was beautiful, for so clear and healthy was the appearance of her skin, in spite of its paleness, that there was not the least shade of sallowness in its hue; the mouth was as difficult to describe as it would be to chisel, for its form seemed to vary with every emotion and sentiment that occupied, in turn, its owner's mind; the lips were full and crimson; the teeth were white and even; the eyes of the darkest blue, fringed with jet black lashes of great length; the eyebrows were *not* arched, but rather straight, and only curled down a little at each outer end; while her hair was dark as night, and

had just sufficient natural wave in it to preserve it from stiffness and formality of appearance. Such is a description—we fear a very broker-like catalogue—of the personal charms of Flora Danvers. It would be difficult to sketch her character in as few words. Indeed we can only attempt some faint outlines of it here, and let the reader fill up the sketch as he follows the fair subject of them through these volumes.

It has been said that most great men have had mothers of considerable mental power. It is certain that many of the foremost characters in history have been heard to ascribe their own success in the first instance to the promptings and precepts of their mothers. It seems but natural that it should be so ; for surely the parent who exercises so vital an influence over our earliest years must have power so to mould the disposition and tastes of the youth, as almost to form the character of the man. The father's influence begins to work at so much later a period of life—in mere childhood, per-

haps, but not in infancy ; and they must have had little experience in the study of the youthful mind, who imagine that the salient points of the character are not developed almost as soon as the power of speech itself is given to the child. Subsequent training may modify and correct certain qualities, but can never eradicate them.

It seems strange, however, and yet it is a fact concerning which we entertain little doubt that the mother exercises much less influence in the formation of her daughter's character than her son's—less in the case of the former than does the father. Let the reader recall the first half dozen families he can think of among his acquaintance ; let him run over in his mind the characters of the sons and daughters so far as he can read them, and let him see whether he does not trace far more resemblance to the mother in the sons and to the father in the daughters than *vice versâ*. We speak of course, of moral and mental, not of physical,

resemblance. And so it was in the case of Flora Danvers. She was unlike her mother, entirely, except in some points of personal appearance, though even here her expression was different. She had none of her vanity, none of her weakness, none of her frivolity. On the contrary, she had all the firmness and chivalry of her father's nature, all his admiration of greatness, all his faith in integrity and honor ; but then she had also—what he lacked—charity of heart, sympathy, gentleness, and a vivid sense of the beautiful which is the source of all poetry.

Flora had been educated like most of her class—everything presented to the perceptive faculties—nothing to the reflective ones, as phrenologists describe them. Languages, music, drawing, painting, had all been taught her by the best masters that could be procured for each, and each had been mastered with more or less ease according to her natural taste and bias, but the study of history in its broad-

est sense, the study of world's history as the means of comprehending mankind, the study of the great book of nature as the means of approaching to the comprehension of its author—when were such studies presented to a young lady? Where would the teachers be found to direct them? Alas not among the very accomplished foreign professors, and very polished lady preceptors who “finish the education” of the young daughters of the nineteenth century?

But after all who attains to true knowledge through education? Few indeed among either sex. Those whom nature has gifted with Diviner powers of mind educate themselves in the school of reflection—all that they learn out of it is mere alphabet. And Flora Danvers had studied deeply in this great school—aye, and almost unconsciously too. She little knew how much and how deeply she had thought. She little knew through what slow and subtle trains of reflection she had passed; how much

she had disciplined her own mind ; how far more she was that which she had made herself, than what all her pastors and masters had fashioned her into. Yet so it was, and while the system had its defects, while she had imbibed many false impressions from the want of a guiding hand to direct her mind in its researches after truth, she had at least gained much that was fitted to render her—that *had* rendered her—a character to love, to admire, and to respect.

CHAPTER XII.

THE Danvers family lived rather a nomadic life. They had a house in Upper Brook Street, and they had a country place, called Springfield; but the latter was not very large, and as it would not accommodate a dozen visitors at a time, Lady Emily voted it dull and stupid, and declared it did not agree with her health. So that when the London season was over, the Danvers generally started off, first to a watering place, which lady Emily positively insisted

on, and afterwards on a round of visits to pleasant friends with large country houses, and good shooting. The Colonel occasionally "did" the moors for two or three weeks, but he went there alone, and left Lady Emily and Flora at the sea-side, or perhaps under the protection of Lionel, if that young gentleman happened to have leave of his regiment at such a period—though he generally took good care not to apply for it at that time, for the undutiful son was by no means partial to too much of his mother's society.

Lionel was very much attached to his sister—it was one of the best traits in his character. He listened to her counsels with more respect than to those of any other person, not excepting his father. He felt that he *must* have done wrong when she condemned his conduct, though in truth her condemnation was so gently expressed, that it was rather a remonstrance. At the same time he by no means owned frankly, and at once, his sense of her justice—he was

far too hot-headed, and too hot-tempered for such a course. He kicked and plunged a great deal like a wild colt when it feels the bit; he protested that he had done no wrong, that his sister was so straight-laced in her notions, and so uncharitable in her judgment, that if it were to be done over again, he should act just as he had done; that every body at home seemed determined to thwart and annoy him, and he was sorry, devilish sorry, he had got leave at all—he had much better have remained where he was with his regiment—his brother officers were a set of good fellows, and they never condemned him—and so forth.

During these little outbursts, Flora would remain quite quiet. Nothing could tempt her to throw in an irritating word or remark at such a time—a godlike forbearance, this; for when a man is in a rage he continually exposes every vulnerable point about him, and the temptation to give him a thrust somewhere, is one that few can resist. Yet the consequences

of that thrust may be fatal to the angry man's improvement, while silence and forbearance, or a single soothing word will act like oil upon the troubled waves, and still the storm of passion. So Flora sat still and offered no opposition to her brother's petulance, or perhaps, when he uttered some very unkind word, or unjust accusation against herself she gave him but one look—a gentle look of sorrowful remonstrance—and Lionel cooled down rapidly, and then begged his sister's forgiveness, and kissed her, and promised to do exactly as she should bid him. And then Flora shed a few tears, silly girl, and felt so fond of her brother, and never doubted that he would reform from that day, and that was the last of such scenes.

But Lionel didn't reform a bit—at least not longer than for a month. He was very penitent at the time, and would go back to his regiment and announce his determination to "cut" play henceforth—he would sell his tandem horses, and one of his hunters—and would give up

champagne breakfasts. His brother officers laughed, some openly, and some secretly; he stood the former better than the latter, for he was tolerably quick at repartee, and had no objection to a little verbal sparring. But when he fancied that he was an object of ridicule with some of the silent ones, especially with Captain Dashwood, who never laughed at any man, but whose condemnation could be read in his eye alone, then Frank began to feel all his virtuous resolutions give way, and by degrees he fell into all his old habits again.

Captain Dashwood was Lionel's model man. Most young men set up some idol of the kind, and worship it—though the idol is often but a golden calf. Captain Dashwood was a man of five and thirty—very good-looking, very well dressed, very quiet, and very finished in manner. In fact, in each of these particulars he was decidedly superior to every man in the regiment, and to most other men, also. His

perfect self-possession was the most remarkable of his qualities, and it is one which possesses immense fascination for a very young man—it is inimitable, unattainable, save by long practice and self-control, by any one, and impossible to others of exciteable temperament. Captain Dashwood was never disconcerted, never excited, never betrayed into an undignified act or expression. No one knew what his family was, or what were his means ; he made no pretensions to be rich, yet he kept his own hunters, drove his cabriolet, gave the most *recherché* of breakfasts, played, and lost his money occasionally, and yet was never known to be short of money, or to be in debt. He certainly had never asked the loan of a five pound note of any man in the regiment, nor had he ever lent one himself ; but then, no one would have thought of applying to him under any circumstances—there wasn't a cornet in the corps who wouldn't sooner have asked even the grey-headed

severe old Colonel to put his name to a bill for him, than have made such a request to Captain Dashwood.

He never volunteered any information about himself, his family, his circumstances, or his past history. On the other hand, he never displayed any curiosity on such points in the case of other people. His opinion was not easily gained, but when once given, it had great weight in the regiment, especially among the younger officers. But the Colonel and those above Captain Dashwood shewed him great respect also; he was an admirable soldier and never failed in his duties. The men liked him better than any other officer in the regiment, for he was more careful and attentive to their domestic wants than any other, and the reserve which seemed part of his nature in his intercourse with his equals was quite imperceptible in his manner towards his inferiors.

The former shrank from making him their

confidant, or asking his advice, for they dreaded his quiet look of contempt for their folly; but the men sought him out in preference to any of their officers, and told all their little troubles without hesitation. They were right—for they never failed to receive the best advice, and something even more solid and consolatory at his hands. They had another reason for respecting him too—they knew his courage. In a skirmish in India, when his regiment was giving way, he had rallied it alone, (though only a lieutenant at the time), and dashing forward at the head of it, he had plunged into the very thick of the enemy, so that they who saw him believed him almost blessed with a charmed existence to escape as he did without a single wound, while many a warrior bit the dust beneath his sabre.

Such was Captain Dashwood, as far as ordinary observers could read his character, and undoubtedly it was one well-fitted to fascinate a young man of Lionel Danvers's caste of mind.

Indeed Lionel, by degrees, overcame some of his feelings of awe, if we may so term it, and was far more intimate with Dashwood than any of his brother officers.

It was a great mistake of Lionel Danvers, however, to suppose that Dashwood sneered or smiled at his fits of reformation from any feeling of their being unworthy of him. On the contrary, when Dashwood troubled himself to think about another man's affairs, which was not often, he took rational views of them. He thought Lionel an ass—not for intending to reform—but for not having the resolution absolutely and effectually to do so, and still more, perhaps, for standing in need of reformation.

He would have been dreadfully disgusted with himself were he capable of doing an act which rendered it necessary for him to retrace his steps afterwards. Though everything about him was of the most perfect and the most costly he was not extravagant—that is to say,

he never went beyond his means. And there was economy in the midst of his luxury ; there was no wasteful expenditure—nothing was frittered or thrown away ; without ever appearing to begrudge his gold, not a sovereign was parted with that did not produce some good result—either administering to his own comfort and luxury, or (as in the case of charity) to the wants of others. To light cigars with ten-pound notes, to throw handfulls of sovereigns to be scrambled for among Irish beggars, to set up priceless statuettes and works of art as targets for pistol practice, and other such freaks of young gentlemen overburdened for the time with wealth—these would have excited Captain Dashwood's deepest repugnance, not because they were morally wrong, but because they were boyish, ungentlemanly, "snobbish." Had a cigar imbibed any wonderfully delicious flavor from the paper of a ten-pound note, Dashwood would have lighted his with it if he had one at hand ; did he

consider a scramble of Irish beggars an entertaining instead of a very filthy sight he would have gratified himself with it at any expense within his means ; and had he seen that choice statuettes were better targets than ordinary bulls'-eyes, he would no doubt have practised with them ; but to do any of these things to shew his contempt for money would have been quite as vulgar in his estimation as to display an excessive regard for riches. In a word, Dashwood was a man whose religion was propriety—the propriety of St. James's Street and Pall Mall.

If Dashwood had taken Lionel into his protection, as it were, and constantly thrust his advice upon him, he might have guided him as he pleased, for a time ; but a reaction would have come, Lionel would have got tired of being led and lectured, and have thrown off the yoke altogether. But as Dashwood did nothing of the kind, shewed a perfect indifference to Lionel's course of life, whether he were

in the extravagant or the reforming mood, and always avoided giving him any advice at all, the young man looked up to him with the profoundest respect, and would have constantly asked his opinion, but that he feared to lower himself in his Divinity's eyes by needing it.

It had constantly crossed Lionel's mind, "what would Flora think of Dashwood?" He had always painted him to her in the most favourable colours—at least what he fancied such; but yet the portrait had not satisfied his sister. Often when she expostulated with him on some favorite extravagance, he would answer, "oh, Dashwood always does so." To which Flora would naturally reply, "perhaps he can better afford it." "I don't know I'm sure what his means are—he never says a word about them," would be Lionel's reply, and then he would branch off into a dozen anecdotes about Dashwood, shewing how deeply he was interested in him, and how highly he valued his acquaintance.

Lionel could not recall anything that he had ever said evil of Dashwood, or which could tend to make anything but the most pleasing of impressions on his hearer. He had always told Flora that his friend was a man of most punctilious honor, of most finished address, of considerable attainments, and greatly respected by the Colonel—that he never was in debt or in a “row,” of any kind, that he was liked by the men, and that he was known to be the soul of courage. Yet he couldn’t raise Flora’s enthusiasm, or once get her to say the few words he wished to hear from her lips. “I should like to see him.” At one time he set this down to maidenly reserve, at another (when he was out of temper) to the circumstance of the subject of his eulogy being one of *his* friends and therefore of small account at home. But he was wrong in either supposition, and it was very unlikely that he should guess the real cause.

The simple truth was this : Flora saw that

Lionel was greatly attached to this Captain Dashwood, who appeared, from description to be a man of considerable decision of character and of good sense. She felt that such a man must be well aware of her brother's respect for him, and must be equally alive to the many sad follies which that young man was daily committing; yet she never could hear that he had once remonstrated with her brother or given him one solitary word of good counsel. In this she read what she most hated—selfishness! She could well understand the ease with which he would dismiss the thought of interfering with Lionel's affairs, as matters which did not concern him—matters in which he had no right to interfere; but the excuse only stamped the defect more plainly on his character in the young girl's eyes. She knew that it must be a painful and an invidious course for a man to take, to task his young comrade and companion, a course that might even lay him open to personal annoyance

(though *that* risk was but slight)—still she fancied that there was a higher sentiment which should overrule such considerations—the sense of duty, and *she* never doubted that it was the bounden duty of every one of God's creatures to use whatever influence he possessed, large or small, in the highest sphere or in the lowest, to a good and noble purpose. All this seemed so obvious, so simple to her mind that she could not suppose that Captain Dashwood did not see or know it as well as herself. Why then did he not act upon that knowledge? Because Self interposed.

Something of this opinion she once let fall to Lionel, but he laughed at the idea, and told her she was very ignorant of men's notions on such subjects; that Dashwood was too sensible a fellow to interfere in his affairs, especially without even being asked for his opinion or advice, and that in fact it would be a great piece of impudence in any man to do so. However, he never gave the matter a second

thought, and certainly never for a moment supposed that Flora could have formed any opinion of Dashwood's character on such grounds as those.

He consoled himself for his disappointment at not being able to interest her in his friend so much as he desired, by the idea that her opinion would be all that he could wish when she came to know him. This, indeed, was an event he had most at heart to bring about—the introduction of Dashwood to his sister.

“ But it's so difficult to manage it,” he said. “ Dashwood doesn't seem to care much for London, at least he seldom asks for leave during the season, and if he does I don't get leave at the same time. Then my mother will go dragging me all over the country afterwards—first to Cowes and then to Lord Snoozel's, and then to Sir Timothy Foole's, and one confounded place and another that there's no getting on comfortably. If I could only persuade the good lady to stay at Springfield

for a single month, I'd manage to ask Dashwood to come over and stay with us. I wish I could bribe Sir Benjamin into insisting on her visit to our country place as absolutely indispensable to her health.

For once, Fate seemed to favour Lionel's plans. Lady Emily was suddenly seized with a desire to go to Springfield in the month of October one year.

"Hurrah!" cried Lionel, when he heard of it in a note from his sister. "And the pheasants will be as thick as blackberries, for I swore I'd shoot Bennett if he didn't preserve them well. Decidedly I'll get leave for October, and decidedly I'll take Dashwood with me—if he'll go."

CHAPTER XIII.

Captain Dashwood accepted Lionel's invitation immediately, and both applied for leave of absence, and obtained it.

"Do you take your hunters with you, Danvers?" asked the Captain.

"I think not," replied Lionel, "the fact is, I don't know much about the hounds in our neighbourhood, or whether there are any very good meets—we scarcely ever go to Springfield, you see."

“There are the Daubney and the Shiffnal packs, both very fair ones, within about ten miles north and east of you,” observed Dashwood.

“Are there? do you know the country then?” asked Lionel, in surprise.

“Slightly,” said the Captain. “I have hunted there.”

“Perhaps you know Springfield then,” said Lionel.

“I have seen it,” answered Dashwood.

“Well, then, at least, you must know that it is not a very extensive establishment, and so you will not expect too much,” said Lionel, smiling.

“It seemed to me a very pretty place indeed,” observed his friend, without noticing Lionel’s apology for his family seat.

“So it is—my sister is very fond of it; but that dear lady mother of mine can’t endure it because it is small. I believe she’d like

the Vatican in Leicestershire for her own country residence."

"Your sister is more fond of quiet, I suppose?" said Dashwood.

"Yes—decidedly so. She reads a great deal—and yet, I assure, she's no 'blue,'—so you need be under no apprehension of having to encounter a literary lady every day of your life at Springfield."

"But touching the hunters again?" asked the Captain.

"Ah—ah—well, perhaps we'd better take them—eh?—don't you think so?" said the young man, with an air of indecision.

"Just as *you* please," answered Dashwood.

"Well, I'm not fond of hunting so early in the season," said Lionel, "are you? suppose we go without them, and take our chance?"

Dashwood smiled and said "Certainly," and then Lionel felt quite uncomfortable, for he fancied that he had decided wrongly in his

friend's opinion ; but in truth, Dashwood cared nothing at all about the question, and thought no more of the matter. Such, however, was the irresolution and painful fear of not pleasing, which always took possession of Lionel in his intercourse with the man whom he yet sought out in preference to all others.

In due time, they arrived at Springfield, where they were, for the present, the only guests. They received a hearty welcome from Colonel Danvers, who had formed a very high opinion of Captain Dashwood from his son's account of him, and from what he had heard of his reputation as an officer ; and the moment he saw him, his prepossession was confirmed by the Captain's appearance, and he muttered to himself—

“ A soldier—every inch of him ! ”

Flora, too, had felt some anxiety as the time of meeting drew near, and she was struck—more so than she cared to own to herself—by the visitor's person.

“He is *very* handsome !” was her thought.

Lady Emily, who never troubled herself with anticipations on any subject, but met events as they came, only hoped that her son’s friend might be more *comme il faut* than she could expect from one of Lionel’s companions, for she was by no means satisfied with her son’s demeanour ; she told him more than once that his style was bad—decidedly bad—and that he must really strive to improve it if he ever wished to shine in the *beau monde*. But when she saw Captain Dashwood, and conversed with him, she was most agreeably surprised.

“Unquestionably, he is perfect,” was her ladyship’s fiat on the subject.

Lionel was in a state of great delight at the impression his friend produced—not that he had much doubted that it would be so, but still it is something to be positively assured of the event we desire to happen.

The life of the little party would have been dull under ordinary circumstances. With the

exception of pheasant shooting, there was little to occupy the gentlemen. But Captain Dashwood showed no signs of finding the days otherwise than most agreeable. In truth he had plenty of resources at his command from whence to derive amusement.

"Do you sketch, Captain Dashwood?" asked Flora, as the gallant gentleman was turning over the leaves of an album.

"A little, occasionally," he replied.

"Oh—that means that you are a finished draughtsman," said Flora, laughing.

"Not at all, Miss Danvers," he replied, smiling; "I always confess my attainments as well as my deficiencies. There is as much vanity in underrating our own performances as in thinking too highly of them."

"Well then, that I may form my own judgment," said Flora. "will you sketch yonder scene, where the river turns by that old ruin, in the book you are now looking over? I set you a task which I have never been able

to accomplish myself, for I have torn out every attempt I have made on it."

"I will try," said Dashwood.

Lionel had expected a pretty speech from Dashwood expressing his hopelessness of succeeding, when Flora had failed; but the Captain had too much good taste to perpetrate such common-places; so he took the book and some drawing pencils, and did as he was asked.

In the course of half an hour, he walked up to Flora and handed her the book—it contained a most exquisitely finished sketch of the scene she had pointed out.

"How beautiful!" she exclaimed almost involuntarily.

She raised her eyes as she said so, and met those of Dashwood. Was there not something beyond the ordinary expression in *his*? A looker-on would have said—"No—nothing:" and yet she almost *felt* that there was.

“You must take the book to mama,” she said—“it is hers.”

He did so, and even then she could detect no change in his countenance, though she almost anticipated one slight look at least of disappointment when he found that the book was not hers, and that his task had been performed for her mother. It was something approaching to coquetry, we fear, that made her expect, if she did not hope, this. At all events, she was disappointed in her conjectures. And still more puzzled would she have been had she known that Dashwood was all along aware of the ownership of the book, and had made his sketch, knowing that it would belong to Lady Emily.

Dashwood had a splendid barytone voice, and was an admirable musician. So he constantly sung duets with Flora in the evening. If ever there was anything more calculated than another to foster a tender feeling between two persons it would certainly be singing duets

together. The blending of the voices has something fascinating in it beyond conception, and then the words, the passionate words of love that are sung! It is all very well to say that they are sung as a mere matter of course, and are of no more account than the words spoken by an actress on a stage; but we don't believe it possible for a handsome, agreeable, disengaged young lady and young gentleman to be constantly vowing love and devotion to each other in harmonious numbers and to divine music without, occasionally, and by degrees, feeling a little of the passion they are acting.

Decidedly, if we had a daughter we would not let her sing duets with any but the most "eligible" young men.

Flora rode on horseback very often and very well. Her brother and Dashwood accompanied her, and they went all over the neighbourhood of Springfield together. On one occasion, Lionel was riding a horse which he had re-

cently purchased, and he was playing the fool a great deal in riding at hedges and ditches to “try” him. In making one of these jumps the horse, who was not perfectly sound, fell heavily, and threw Lionel on to his head. The blood gushed out of his nostrils—Dashwood sprung from his saddle, and lifted him up—the youth was not much hurt after all—Dashwood begged Flora to have no fear, and setting her brother on his horse, he walked by his side, and held the bridle.

Flora was touched by his gentleness ; but alas, the captain was every instant brushing a place on his coat which Lionel’s blood had stained. And there was an air of scarcely perceptible vexation too as he did it—it could not be for the value of the coat—it must be for the temporary damage done to his personal appearance. Flora Danvers saw it, and quick as lightning her own pre-formed opinion of his character crossed her mind, and the harsh little interpretest said within herself:—

“Selfishness and vanity !”

It would be difficult to say what Dashwood thought of Flora. A man so accustomed to conceal his thoughts and feelings was not likely to be very demonstrative in such a case. Indeed he might reasonably have thought no more of Flora Danvers than of any other young lady of his acquaintance, but that he was thrown for a time so completely into her society, and she was certainly no commonplace girl. Two people more different from each other in tastes, habits, and sentiments, it might not have been easy to find ; but they had at least one point in common—great decision of character. And when two strongly marked characters are daily brought into contact, it is rarely that some kind of sympathy fails to arise between them.

Flora had discovered another point in Dashwood's character which she had half suspected to exist in it—a want of openness. We have said that he never talked of himself—so far as

this prevents egotism it is well, but carried to an excess it is not pleasing, and we involuntarily distrust a man who is careful not to reveal a word about his own history. Flora was utterly free from vulgar curiosity on such a subject, or on any other ; yet she could not but think it strange that the words “father,” “mother,” “brother,” or “sister,” never passed their visitor’s lips. It seemed as if there were something to conceal, and the effect was not agreeable. On the other hand, this might be accidental, or the effect of a habit of never making himself, or his, the subject of his remarks. This supposition received some support from the fact that when one or two of the neighbouring gentry called at Springfield they generally claimed Dashwood as an old friend, though the latter had never alluded to his acquaintance with them before. It might be a habit then—but it was an unpleasant one in the eyes of so thoroughly open-hearted a person as Flora Danvers.

And yet we must own that something approaching to fascination was gradually being exercised over Flora's mind by the handsome and accomplished soldier. She did not know it—she was not aware to how great an extent her curiosity (the curiosity to read his heart) was being excited—how to think of him for a very great many minutes, though not consecutive ones, in each day was becoming a habit with her—how something approaching to an *interest* in him was fixing itself in her mind. We say that she was not aware of all this: we are not sure that she would even have been alarmed at it had she known it, for she was too young and too unversed in the strange mechanism of the heart to know to what these feelings led. She would have considered it natural to study the character of such a man as Dashwood—natural to feel some curiosity as to the real sentiments of one who was so well able to conceal them—natural to feel an interest in the chosen friend of her brother, and

whose influence might so direct the future of that brother's career. But she could not have suspected that such curiosity and interest are but the first germs of passion, or she would have shrunk from them as from the bite of an adder—for the thought of *loving* Dashwood would have terrified her beyond description—why, it would be difficult satisfactorily to tell—but so it was. However, she could not apprehend such danger; none *can* apprehend it: the lesson is taught but once, and the school is experience.

One or two other visitors had joined the little party at Springfield before Lionel and Dashwood had been many days there; so that Flora was thrown less into *tête-à-tête* society with the soldier than formerly. One of the first effects produced by this change of domestic arrangements was to make Flora involuntarily compare the new arrivals with their first visitor, and the result of the comparison was :—

“How very inferior in sense and information to Captain Dashwood !”

The time fixed for the departure of Lionel and Dashwood had not yet arrived, when the latter one morning announced that he had received a letter which rendered his proceeding to London at once imperative. Could Flora have read her own heart as well as she used to do, she would have been conscious of a chilling sensation of regret there when she heard this announcement ; but it is one of the peculiarities of the first insidious approaches of the tender passion that it blinds us—not to the faults of its object, as is vulgarly supposed, but to our own state of feeling. It was, we think, for *this* reason that the ancients depicted Cupid blind.

“Won’t you come back this way ?” said Lionel.

“My stay in London will be very uncertain in duration,” answered Dashwood, “so that I fear I cannot promise myself that pleasure.”

“I am very sorry, Captain Dashwood, upon my soul,” said the Colonel, “but at all events I hope this visit of yours to Springfield, will not be the last.”

“Many thanks, my dear sir,” answered Dashwood.

“And after all then,” said Lady Emily, “I shall be robbed of the pleasure of introducing you to Mrs. Townley St. Leger. She will be here to-morrow—you really *ought* to know her.”

“I have had that pleasure for some time,” said Dashwood, bowing.

“Indeed !” replied Lady Emily, “then I can anticipate *her* disappointment when she hears of your departure.”

Dashwood smiled and bowed again.

“Has Miss Danvers any commissions I can execute for her in town ?” he asked, turning to Flora, who alone of the family had been silent.

“None, I thank you,” she replied, and to her

intense annoyance she felt herself blush—why she couldn't imagine—it was very provoking.

Dashwood departed, and a few hours later in the day Mr. and Mrs. Townley St. Leger arrived at Springfield. After the first greetings were over, Lady Emily said—

“Ah, my dear Mrs. St. Leger, I am quite miserable—Captain Dashwood has left us only to-day—you know him, do you not?”

“Indeed I know him well,” replied, Mrs. St. Leger, “and to tell you the truth he is the only man in the world I fear. Don't mistake me; I like him, I admire him, but I can't tell you why—I am afraid of that man.”

CHAPTER XIV.

WE trust the reader feels some interest in the fate of Frank Nugent, whom we left some chapters since, with a broken head in a hospital. It was not written in the book of fate, that he should die from the thump of an Irishman's bludgeon; but his recovery was very slow, and even when he was out of danger, and in condition to be moved from the hospital he was in a state of of great lassitude, and required careful nursing.

As soon, however, as he had recovered his consciousness sufficient to recollect what brought him to that strange place, he began to speculate upon what he should do when he rose from his sick bed—and whether the Marsdens knew of his accident, and what Mrs. Townley St. Leger must think of his silence. However, he was soon satisfied on most points by the hospital attendants. First he was informed that a very strange-looking gentleman, had been to see him; this he knew from the description to be his faithful friend David Tonks. Next he was told a very handsome and elegant lady had called almost every day to enquire after him; this he rightly guessed to be Mrs. Townley St. Leger. Afterwards he had the delight of seeing the good David and learning from him all that had occurred during his illness.

David had seen Mrs. St. Leger often, and David thought her the handsomest, the most elegant, and the kindest and best woman in

the whole world. And yet David was not sure that he was quite just in saying so either; for although nobody could be kinder or better than Mrs. St. Leger, he almost thought that Fanny Marsden was her equal in those points. And then Frank smiled and said he feared David had lost his heart, and David looked so truly sad while he protested to the contrary, that Frank was quite sorry for him.

Now David Tonks kept one piece of information to himself, and we must leave an intelligent reader to find out David's reason for this concealment. He never told Frank that Fanny Marsden had met him every other day at Charing Cross during Frank's illness. Whether David had been requested by Fanny to be silent about this, or whether he thought it more prudent for Frank's sake not to divulge it, or whether he was afraid of being quizzed about these interviews with a young lady—these are questions concerning which we are as badly informed as the reader, and so we re-

peat we must leave him to settle them to his own satisfaction, or like ourselves to remain in doubt as to their solution.

“The doctor thinks you will be able to be moved in a day or two,” observed David.

“Moved! ah,” said Frank, “I wonder where I shall be moved to?”

“To Pentonville of course—won’t you?” exclaimed David, with a look of surprise and almost of alarm.

“I don’t think so,” replied Frank. “How should I have the face to go there, my good friend? Do you not remember that my only claim to my lodgings there consisted in my teaching the children? Now, until I am able to do so again, it would surely be unjust in me to go back to the rooms. Besides, they may have got some one in my place.”

“Oh no, they have not,” said David; “and they expect you back. Mrs. Marsden says she would’nt lose you for all the world. The fact is, the good woman is mad about you ever since

Mrs. St. Leger drove up to her house to call on you. She thinks you're related to all the aristocracy, and half the peerage, and she tells everybody so."

Frank smiled ; but he continued—

"Still it would not be fair to take advantage of the good lady's kindness. The Marsdens cannot be rich, and I cannot pay them properly for my rooms—indeed, I don't know how I am to live at all for the present."

David looked very blank ; but he did not give up the point.

"By-the-bye," said he, "I have a packet to give you. It was left by a man at your lodgings, with directions that it was to be handed to you as soon as you were able to attend to it. Miss Marsden entrusted me with it, as she thought I should see you as soon as any one ; here it is !"

He handed Frank a rather bulky letter addressed "Frank Nugent, Esq," in a large

bold official looking hand, and sealed with a plain official seal. Frank opened it, and found a sheet of note paper without a single word inscribed on it, but folded round five crisp £10 notes! He stared, turned it about, looked at the address again and again, and then at the notes, and then at the seal. It was all a mystery to him. Fifty pounds! Who could have sent him such a sum? It was a fortune—an Eldorado.

David was in great delight—more so than if it had been sent to himself. *Now* wouldn't Frank go to Petonville?—and *now* wouldn't he know how to live?

“But where can it have come from?” said Frank. “There isn't a man in London, save yourself, that would give me a *sou*, and I suppose you have not been making a little fortune lately?”

“No—no—I swear to you that *I* know nothing about it,” said David, “and I don't

think Miss Marsden had the least idea of the contents of the packet when she gave it to me."

"It must be Mrs. St. Leger who has done this," said Frank. "And yet I don't like to accept it."

David stared—an immense stare that might have expressed his doubts as to his young friend's sanity. Indeed he even recommended Frank to lie down again and sleep; for Frank had raised himself on his elbow. He took his friend's advice, and David departed to let first Fanny and then Mrs. Townley St. Leger know of Frank's improvement and consciousness.

From Mrs. St. Leger Frank, next morning, received a little note of warm congratulation on his convalescence, and a request, most kindly and delicately worded, that he would let her husband be his banker for a short time, if he stood in need of present funds, as she felt sure he must do. This puzzled the young

man still more, for it seemed to intimate that she was unaware of the £50 packet. He, however, conveyed her, through David, his warmest thanks, and assured her that he was well provided for at present—though by whose generosity he could not tell.

In a few days, Frank Nugent was removed to his old quarters in Charles Street, Pentonville. Mrs. Marsden received him in a state of immense excitement; her cap was unusually wild in its appearance that day, and the rate at which she talked, and the number of times she mentioned “that beautiful lady Mrs. Saintly Leger,” would be awful to reckon. Fanny looked agitated, and seemed frightened—almost as if she regretted seeing Frank; but certainly that was not the cause, though she didn’t quite know what the cause was; but she felt very faint—and then didn’t Mr. Nugent look dreadfully pale? And Frank was conveyed up stairs to his garrets, for he insisted on going to them, though Mrs. Marsden wanted very much

to give up the front parlours to him ; but he would not hear of such a thing.

The day after his arrival, Mrs. St. Leger called. The excitement in the street at the sight of her carriage was almost as great as on the former occasion ; but the tall footman could not produce quite such an effect this time, for Mrs Marsden had tied up the kcocker in great bandages with an old kid glove outside, so that it looked as if it had a cold in its head, and only gave out a husky sound instead of its usual sharp rat-tap.

Mrs. Marsden, however, rushed to the door with the stupid servant girl, and began to curtsy to Mrs. St. Leger, who as soon as she ascertained that Frank was there and might be seen by her, got out of the carriage and entered the house. And then Mrs. Marsden led the way to Frank's garret apologising all the while for the "muddle things were in, but it was their cleaning-day. Saturday, she believed, was most people's cleaning-day—but still she'd

have had it done on Friday, if she'd known Mrs. St. Leger 'd been coming—but she did so hate to see things look in a muck—and houses did get so dirty in London—the smuts was so nasty—and her first floors never wiped their boots though their connections were highly respectable indeed,” and so on till she reached Frank's room, and showed the visitor into it.

Frank was very grateful for this visit, and said so ; and Mrs. St. Leger was all kindness and cordiality. She talked to him about his friend David Tonks, whom she pronounced the best creature in existence, and then Frank told her all David's history, which interested her very much, and she declared that something must positively be done for him. Then she asked who was the pretty girl she had caught sight of down stairs ? And then Frank blushed, though he certainly had no business to do so ; but he blushed all the more at the thought of the interpretation his visitor might put on it.

However, he told who Fanny was, and hinted his suspicion of David being smitten with her charms. Sly Frank ! he only dragged this in to throw the lady on another scent, so that she might cease to suspect *him* of any *tendre* in that quarter. And then Mrs. St. Leger informed him that several literary friends of hers were most anxious to be introduced to him, and she believed that some of them might be of the greatest service to him. This was very pleasing indeed to Frank's ears, and it brought to mind another circumstance—the receipt of the packet with the £50. He told Mrs. St. Leger of this ; but she assured him on her honour that she knew nothing of it. Frank's surprise was really great at this announcement, for he had all along believed the money to come from her, but he now saw by her manner that it was not so.

Before her departure Mrs. St. Leger sent for Mrs. Marsden and her daughter, and bade them be very careful indeed of her young friend, for

it was a most valuable life that was in their care—the life of one who would be one of the ornaments of his country—aye, she was sure of it. Frank smiled at this, Mrs. Marsden stared and wondered whether Frank wasn't going to turn out another Whittington, and be three times lord mayor of London, and poor Fanny felt very much agitated and coloured with delight.

“And you,” said Mrs. St. Leger, turning to her, “I shall expect you to be an excellent little nurse; mind, this gentleman is my adopted son, and I place him in your charge—so take every care of him, or you'll have to dread the displeasure of a very angry mother, you will find”

Fanny smiled and blushed, and promised to do all she could, and Mrs. Marsden said she was sure Fanny 'd wait on him and mind him like an infant—though whether Fanny was to be the infant, or Frank, didn't clearly appear from Mrs. Marsden's speech, and she possibly

had not quite made up her mind upon the subject herself. And then Mrs. St. Leger went away and left Mrs. Marsden to expatiate on everything connected with her in glowing terms for about half an hour.

Fanny Marsden fulfilled her promise to the letter. A better or more attentive little nurse could not have existed. It was really astonishing to see how she anticipated every want of the sick man, though people want so many things, or fancy so, in illness.

Amongst other occupations which Frank gave her was that of reading to him. Fanny read very nicely—an accomplishment not always attained by better educated people. It wants taste and a good voice, and the young lady possessed both.

David Tonks used to come and see Frank almost every day, and sit with him for some time alone, but Frank always found some excuse for sending for Fanny, and then they would all converse together. But Fanny was

never quite at her ease in Frank's presence ; there was something approaching to awe in the feeling with which she regarded him. She never conversed with him entirely as with an equal though he encouraged her all in his power to do so. With David Tonks she was free from any embarrassment. While on the other hand David had lately become quite shy in her presence, especially when it was in Frank's presence also. All these were mysterious little facts which the reader may interpret as he pleases.

By degrees, as Frank progressed, he thought of attempting composition again. So he asked Fanny to be his amanuensis, for he was still too weak to sit up at a table to write. It was a great source of delight to Fanny to perform this office. She, of course, admired everything that Frank dictated beyond measure, was dreadfully interested in the heroines of his little love tales, and more than once had to stop and dry her tears. Frank laughed at

this—but not unkindly—and he thought Fanny a good, gentle-hearted, little girl. And he was flattered too—the young author was—at the effect he was able to produce by his invention. It seemed to him a foreshadowing of the effects he might produce on the great world outside, The goose ! as if any nonsense would not have seemed beautiful to his amanuensis when dictated by his interesting self !

“ You never tell me anything about Mr. Spriggett and Mr. Biddle now,” observed Frank to her one day.

Fanny smiled.

“ But you know that Mr. Biddle is a decided admirer of yours,” he continued.

“ I’m sure I don’t appreciate his admiration then,” said Fanny.

“ But you ought, you know,” rejoined Frank ; “ don’t you think he’s very good-looking ?”

“ No,” said Fanny.

“Well—then isn’t he very well dressed?” asked Frank.

“Worse still,” said Fanny.

“Oh, you have bad taste, I fear,” said Frank, smiling. “I’m sure he wears very handsome neckties, and—”

“Pray don’t talk of him,” Fanny interrupted him—“the man is my abomination. I don’t know which I hate most—himself or his companion.”

“What do you think of Mr. Tonks?” asked Frank, abruptly.

“He is an excellent creature,” replied Fanny; “and certainly he is most devotedly attached to you.”

“To some one else also, I fancy,” said Frank, significantly.

Fanny looked at him in some surprise.

“Oh yes, Miss Fanny,” he continued, “you need not pretend to be so very unconscious. If *I* can see Mr. David Tonks’s glances, surely you must see them even more clearly.”

“Indeed,” said Fanny, quite flurried, “indeed—you are mistaken. I’m sure, I never noticed—I mean, I don’t believe—I don’t think Mr. Tonks ever looks at me more than any one else.”

“Then he would have very bad taste,” said Frank, gallantly; “but he does—the poor man is evidently smitten, and I hope you won’t be cruel to him.”

“I!” exclaimed Fanny, “pray what would you have me do?”

“Well,” said Frank, gravely, “you might do worse than smile on poor David Tonks. He is not rich certainly; but a better-hearted fellow I don’t believe the world contains. I’m sure he’s falling in love with you, and as I am very fond of him, and of you too, Fanny,” (here Fanny’s heart beat very quickly) “upon my soul, I shall be sorry to see the poor man crossed. I dare say it’s very wrong of me to talk to you about such things, but I feel a deep interest in you, Fanny—almost as if you were

my own sister, and I give you my word, I should like to see you the affectionate wife of David Tonks."

Poor Fanny! she did contrive to look once at Frank—such a look it was—and then she burst into tears, and ran out of the room, sobbing as if her heart would break.

CHAPTER XV.

THE introductions which Mrs. St. Leger gave to Frank Nugent on his recovery were of great service to him. In no profession are they more requisite than in that of literature, for every young author wants both advice as to his writings, and opportunities of bringing them before the public. Without the one he may roll about in the slough of error half his life, writing on false principles, and in a bad style ; while for want of the other, he may be doomed

to fill no other place in the world than as a contributor to waste paper baskets. The ranks of periodical literature are at least as crowded as those of any profession or trade in the world ; to suppose that the editor of a magazine could peruse all the MSS. submitted to his notice would be to imagine him possessed of as many eyes as Argus. The utmost he can do is to read those which are sent by persons whose names he knows, and those which are recommended to his consideration by literary friends of the writers. Of these last he will always have plenty, and as friends are naturally more anxious to serve one another than to spare an editor's trouble, the latter may be sure that half the "strongly recommended" articles are unworthy of his perusal. As for all the rest—the mass of the unknown aspiring—what can he do but throw them aside to be "returned with thanks" to the writers, if he be an editor of benevolent disposition, or to light

fires with if he be a curmudgeon? We happened by the merest chance to learn the secret history of the adventures of the first MS. we ourselves sent to the office of a magazine. It came back to us in a short time, with a very neat envelope, lithographed inside "Declined with many sincere thanks," and our MS. was numbered "676."

Shortly after this we were in company with a literary man, to whom, by chance, we mentioned this little event.

"What was the title of your article?" he enquired.

We told him.

"I was at the office myself, and turning over a heap of offered contributions," said our friend, "and I distinctly recollect yours, for I read some of it. 'What's that?' the editor said to me. I told him. 'Oh, I don't know anything about it,' said he, 'throw it aside.' So it was dropped into the 'condemned cell,'

and in due time you received it, thinking, no doubt, that the editor had read every line of it, and didn't like it."

We afterwards got this MS. delivered at the very same office by a mutual friend of ourselves and the editor. It was accepted by the latter in a complimentary note to us, and we are happy to add, that the public liked it also—at least, if the public press represents public opinion.

Now when Frank Nugent had been introduced to one or two gentlemen conducting periodical literature, he found first that he was proceeding on a wrong system altogether. He was dreadfully addicted to sentimental love tales, and though he told them very well, he learnt that nobody cared to read them. The days of sentiment were over. The world had got "fast" and "funny" in its tastes. Ridicule was the goddess of the moment—the only use of sentiment was to be laughed at.

To please the general mob of readers (we don't mean the "vile rabble," but the great mass), it was necessary to conform to their tastes—unless perhaps you had genius to create a fresh one.

"But surely the world still reads poetry," suggested Frank.

"Very little," replied the periodical gentleman.

"Is not Tennyson read?" asked Frank.

"Yes; but what other poet is there in England?"

"Then it is the want of poetry, and not the want of a taste for it in readers," suggested Frank.

"Aye; but does not the one produce the other?" was the reply. "Look for example to the time when Byron wrote his 'English Bards,' and 'Scotch Reviewers.' See the crowd of names good and bad that figure in it. Suppose a Byron to attempt such a work at the

present day. Where would he find half such a catalogue of poets from the best to the worst of scribblers ?”

“Then it is certain that there are fewer poets now than then,” said Frank ; “and perhaps that the inferior poets are less read now than formerly, but will not true and good poetry be read and liked as well by the present age as by any other ?”

“I doubt it,” said the other. “At least, I doubt whether purely sentimental and imaginative poetry will ever be much sought after, unless perhaps it is *very* excellent. For example Southey was both read and liked by our fathers, and he was thought worthy of being made poet laureate. I do not believe that a poet of Southey’s calibre would be read at all now. On the other hand, a new ‘Hudibras’ would take the age by storm. Ingoldsby and Hood are more popular, and better known to the world at large, than even Tennyson.”

“Much as I admire the two former, I fear I am sorry for it,” said Frank.

The editor shrugged his shoulders.

From such conversations as these with the practical men of literature, if we may so term them, Frank learnt, at least, what was required in a periodical writer. It did not altogether accord with his own tastes and bias of mind, but he saw that he must conform to it. No doubt this was a highly reprehensible spirit of his—no doubt he ought to have scorned any other guide than “inspiration”—no doubt he should have followed the dictates of his own “genius” alone, and not have prostituted his pen for hireling purposes. All this, and a great deal more, we can well conceive being uttered by those who think the idea of writing for money something very shocking, because unromantic ; but until inspiration and romance will serve for food and raiment, we fear that “hireling writers” will continue to exist ; and that better and greater men than Frank

Nugent will turn a little aside from their own individual tastes to tickle that of the public.

At all events Frank did it, and he succeeded tolerably well in consequence—so well, indeed, that he declined, henceforth, the very disagreeable task of teaching French and Latin to the young Marsdens, though he requested permission to retain his garrets, (as he had acquired a sort of attachment for them) by paying a rent instead of giving their value in tuition. Mrs. Marsden consented to this with alacrity; for she really looked upon Frank as a very extraordinary young man, and was firmly persuaded that he *would* be a second Whittington, though he had'nt a cat, and “could'nt abide her Tom.”

David Tonks rejoiced in his friend's success, at least as much as any one, and always reminded him that he had prophesied it from the first. He knew that Frank had true genius, and true genius *must* succeed; if he had had the least bit of genius himself, he should have

succeeded long ago ; but he had'nt any—he was nothing but a grub.

But Mrs. St. Leger had not forgotten David Tonks, and she had, at length, secured him a more comfortable means of livelihood than that of roving about the streets for penny-a-line information. She had got him installed as assistant sub-editor of a literary paper ; and David performed his new “paste and scissors duty” most creditably. He became an altered man, too, in personal appearance, for he showed his shirt front now, and it was a clean one, and he wore a decent hat and a new neckcloth. David was a prosperous man ; but whether David was a happy man we won't positively affirm. He was certainly not an ungrateful one—he fully appreciated the advantages of his change of circumstances, and was duly thankful for it ; but David's heart was not at ease—whose is ?

Since the day when Frank Nugent made his rather abrupt allusion to David's passion for

Fanny, and his own approval of it, that young lady had been more than usually shy in his presence. She had not failed in her duties as his nurse during the rest of the time that he required her attentions in that capacity, nor had she declined reading to him or writing for him ; but she was more reserved than formerly, and was out of spirits. Her mother declared she could'nt think what had come to the girl ; she did'nt eat enough to keep a bird alive, that she did'nt—she really thought she must be going to have the measles, for she never *did* have them when she was a child, and when people have them after they're grown up, they're always worse ; and she'd a great mind to make her drink donkey's milk every day, when the two donkeys, as served the lady that was bad in the chest at No. 96, came round.

Frank noticed her altered looks himself, and was sorry for the change ; for he was very fond of Fanny Marsden, and he showed it too. Not

that he had the remotest notion of being in love with her ; but he thought her the kindest and best little girl in the world. The idea of her feeling any other interest in himself than the most platonic one never crossed his mind. It is true that he was puzzled to account for the strange way in which she received his remarks touching David Tonks. Why should she weep at having such a lover recommended to her ? Could she fancy herself so superior to David as to feel herself insulted by Frank's suggestion ? No ; it was not in Fanny's nature to think so highly of herself ; she was as humble-minded as she was gentle and good-natured. Could she have some other lover of whom Frank knew nothing ? It was possible, though not probable, for surely he would have seen or heard of him during his residence in the house. Still it might be a case of attachment against the wishes of her parents, and in that case, his own ignorance of it would be accounted for. Frank thought a great deal on

all this, because, as we have said, he was really interested in Fanny Marsden.

Frank Nugent was now in full swing as a *litterateur*, catering for the monthly amusement of thousands unknown and anonymously. It was hard work, poor pay, and poor satisfaction ; for surely it is unsatisfactory to labour day and night with the brain, and get little pecuniary reward, and less fame. Yet Frank's was the lot of hundreds of other men ; and bad as it was, it was better than his previous state of distress. He could live now in comparative comfort : he was not obliged to dine on a roll and an egg, in the old St. Giles's coffee house ; though he still occasionally frequented it from an odd feeling of attachment to the place where he had speculated so much on his future career, and where he had first made the acquaintance of good, honest David Tonks. He found the life of a writer anything but one of ease and pleasure. The constant wear and tear of the intellect was not small : the daily and hourly

necessity of cultivating fresh thoughts, inventing new stories, describing daily scenes in a novel way, and watching the current of the public taste was sufficiently fatiguing. He often thought of attempting a higher flight, or of producing some complete work; but he found the task difficult, whenever he set to work on it: and then it formed a serious interruption to his ordinary task, for he was obliged to turn to it at stated intervals, and it taxed his imagination and his inventive faculties so severely, as almost to preclude him from thinking of longer labours.

Another discovery he made too. It was that his *collaborateurs* took these matters in a very business-like way: they didn't pretend to write because they liked it: certainly they would have laughed "inspiration" to scorn: they did it to live—because it paid—and they judged of the merit of any piece of writing less by its intrinsic beauties, than by its chance of "taking." Frank strove very hard to avoid

falling into these habits himself ; for he feared that they were fatal to his chance of rising in the scale of literature—and he was right. Such sentiments as these we have mentioned, were natural in the men of little mind, who were first fitted for their present sphere, and for no better ; but they were not the sentiments of men destined to soar higher. He felt that he must conform to circumstances for a time ; but it should be with a due recollection of the necessity that compelled him to do so, and not with an ignoble feeling of satisfaction with his obscurity. He would bide his time, and keep alive the germs of that honourable ambition which alone can elevate a man above the mere drudgery of his calling, in whatever station of life his lot may be thrown.

Imaginative men are apt to feel a great void in the heart when the brain is most active. The intellect is satisfied—the affections crave. It is a dangerous state this : in some it leads to dissipation ; in others, to a morbid melancholy.

It is a disease of the soul, or rather a premonitory symptom of a disease, and its only cure is love. But alas ! the cure may be almost as fatal as the disease, or rather, it may turn to a disease itself, if thwarted in its natural course. How shall love accord with the hard life and the slender means of a poor young *litterateur* ? Love leads on to matrimony, and matrimony leads—Heaven knows where. At all events, it needs a well-filled purse, for if love can live on air, decidedly matrimony *cannot*. It is terribly unromantic in its requirements. It wants house and establishment—raiment—and the three meals a-day. It must be clothed and fed.

But who thinks of all this in the young days, when the heart is tender, and the first spark from the altar of love that touches it can set it in a blaze ? When was the full course of passion checked, and turned aside in a true and generous heart, by the fatal anticipations of matrimony's corporeal wants ? Heaven fore-

fend it ever should be—or the world will be but a large school of mathematicians, instead of a stage for men and women to play out their parts with all the passions and all the poetry that nature has given them.

Frank Nugent began to feel that his heart was empty, and he brooded much upon the void.

CHAPTER XVI.

WE have never read a history of Pentonville, and we are not sure that such a work is extant. And yet we see no reason why it should not be a very interesting and instructive one. Decidedly Pentonville has its antiquities as well as more classically known regions. For example, there is a chemist's shop we could point out, wherein is displayed a blister, which blister we perfectly well recollect twenty years ago—the very same blister in the very

same place—and it was an old-looking blister then. Don't tell us that it is *not* the same blister, because we are sure that it is. For two years we passed it every day on our way to and from school; we used to stop and look at it, and count the cracks in it, which the sun had made. Years afterwards, we went to the spot again, and saw it still there—it was dirtier, and ten times more cracked; but we knew it well, and we positively assert that it is there still. More than that, we are confident that the shop has never been painted during that period, and we even suspect that the bald-headed old man inside it, with the wart on his left cheek, has never taken off that peculiar pair of silver spectacles, with black ribbon bound round the joints which go behind the ears, during the same number of years.

And there are cigar shops, and mosaic jewellery shops, and crockery shops, and curiosity shops—all of whose windows bear

the same unchanging and unchangeable aspect now which they carried a quarter of a century ago. And so, we say, Pentonville *has* its antiquities.

Let it be remembered that the antiquity of anything is relative. Five-and-twenty years is a good age for a pipe of port—a public building is still new after the lapse of that period. Pentonville has not antiquities of the same class as Egypt; but it surpasses Regent Street, at all events.

The general appearance of the Pentonville district, taken as a whole, may be pronounced “seedy.” And yet there are parts of it which have a spruce, prim, smart, green-door-and-brass-knocker look about them. These are chiefly the squares and the new streets branching out of them.

Into one of these squares our business now takes us. It is composed of neat little brick-houses, of no great architectural pretensions; but one may guess the inhabitants of them to

be fairly prosperous from the clean appearance of the curtains in the windows, the hearth-stoned door-steps, and the polished knockers and bell-pulls—not to mention door-plates, which flourish rather luxuriantly here, and attain a considerable size.

A few of the windows have neat little bills in them with “furnished apartments” inscribed on them, and most of the bills contain the additional notification that the apartments are “for single gentlemen.” People who let apartments have a strong partiality to single gentlemen: they don’t dine at home—they don’t lock anything up—they never recollect how much tea they left in the canister—they seldom grumble at “extras” in the bill—they are perfectly innocent of any acquaintance with the price current of bread, meat, tea, or sugar—they don’t make a “fuss” if the rooms are not dusted—in short, they are easily “done for” in every sense of that very comprehensive expression.

In the middle of our square may be seen two enormous pipes of iron, exactly the shape of gigantic magnets. From the pavement we can see nothing more than these large pipes ; but from the first floor windows of the houses one beholds a large sheet of water where a garden *should* be. It is a reservoir of the New River, and the pipes are connected with the water works.

On the door of one of the houses in this square is a small brass-plate, and on it is inscribed the name "Mr. Melchisadech." To judge from the style of equipages that are occasionally drawn up at Mr. Melchisadech's door, and the appearance of the gentlemen (and ladies too) that step out of them, one would say that Mr. Melchisadech lives in very fashionable society. Indeed, it seems strange that a gentleman with such acquaintances should live in so retired and humble a neighbourhood as that of Pentonville.

Let us call on Mr. Melchisadech. He

is sitting in the back parlour—a rather diminutive apartment comfortably furnished. The most prominent article in it is the morocco covered mahogany library table, strewn with papers tied with red tape. If we examine the superscriptions of these papers, we find “Moses v. Greenhorne,” “Isaacs v. Lord Tomnoddy,” “Israel v. ——” and similar titles with Mr. Melchisadech’s name at the bottom. From this we learn that that gentleman is an attorney-at-law, and we can surmise that his clients belong principally to the Hebrew tribes.

Mr. Melchisadech *is* an attorney-at-law—but he is something else also. He accommodates “gentlemen of property, heirs to entailed estates, officers in the army and navy, and others,” with money to any amount on their personal security. So that he has quite a different set of clients from the Messrs. Moses, Isaacs, and Israel, whose names figure on the papers we see lying on the table. These latter gentlemen are only “innocent holders,” as

Mr. Melchisadech and his co-fraternity call them—that is to say, they 'are respectable individuals, to whom he pays a trifle now and then for the use of their names in case he finds himself under the painful necessity of taking legal proceedings against any one to whom he has advanced money. The borrowers of the money have given their acceptance to Mr. Melchisadech, and these little bits of stamped paper lie snugly in his strong box till they become due and payable, when—unless they *are* paid or renewed on his own terms—they are supposed to have been passed away to Mr. Moses, or Mr. Isaacs, or Mr. Israel, who is further supposed to have given full value for them, and who is determined to get the money out of the acceptors. What can poor Mr. Melchisadech do? Mr. Moses places the matter in his hand, and in duty to his client, he is forced to bring the terrors of the law to bear upon the gentleman to whom he was lately so obliging as to lend the money.

By this ingenious little arrangement, Mr. Melchisadech never appears as plaintiff against any one. Moreover he has the satisfaction of pocketing "costs" as well as discount.

Mr. Melchisadech is sitting at the morocco-covered table, reading the morning paper. He is about fifty years of age, with iron-grey curling hair, an exceedingly aquiline nose, and an eye as like a hawk's as it is possible for a human organ of sight to be. He wears a very gaudily embroidered dressing-gown—the rest of his costume is quiet enough; but on the little finger of his right hand is a single-stone diamond ring, of great size and lustre, and worth, at a moderate computation, about a hundred and fifty guineas. He is said to have almost fabulous wealth, and yet he lives at Pentonville. Those who seek him belong to St. James's and Pall Mall, and yet he lives at Pentonville. He is an attorney, too, and yet he lives at Pentonville.

This puzzles some people; for he must find

the locality very inconvenient, or at all events, his customers (clients we mean) must think it so. This last is the very reason why Mr. Melchisadech *does* live at Pentonville. He likes to make people come after him. The greater the personal inconvenience he can put them to, the more he relishes it—next to “discount” it is his greatest pleasure. He has been constantly known to go to Brighton or to Bath, or even to Leamington or Harrogate, for the express purpose of forcing a marquis, in want of his aid, to come after him. He would live in St. George’s in the East, to be still more out of the way, if it were not that his personal comfort would thereby suffer; while Pentonville is at least healthy and sufficiently removed from the west-end, to make the distance annoying to his fashionable friends.

He has another fancy also; he wont see any one after twelve o’clock in the day. This resolution he keeps to on the same principle as

the other—that of annoying his west-end clients.

A dandy who would dismiss his *valet* without warning who should dare to disturb his slumbers before one in the afternoon, is forced to rise at ten and make the most hurried of toilets in order to be in time to see “his jew.” A lady of fashion, whose ordinary breakfast hour is two in the afternoon, is compelled to sit up all night or be dragged out of bed by her *femme-de-chambre* three hours before noon to see “that horrid Mr. Melchisadech,” in order to raise money to pay her losings at *écarté*, or to enable her to purchase that exquisite suite of emeralds at Blundells’, who wont give her credit for them—“the wretches.”

It might be supposed that people would get tired of running after Mr. Melchisadech, at such great personal inconvenience; but it is just the reverse. Not to mention the fact that most of his clients are too much in his power to venture on offending him by going else-

where, it is a great mistake to imagine that people think less of those who treat them somewhat cavalierly. The very independence displayed by Mr. Melchisadech in living at so out-of-the-way a place as Pentonville, has a fascination for his clients. It shows the man to be enormously wealthy, as he would not use any arts to *seek* their visits. And wealth is attractive enough in all people—how much more so in a money-lender !

Beyond the two points we have mentioned—his inconvenient place of abode, and still more inconvenient hour of receiving his clients—Mr. Melchisadech did not assume any airs to annoy those who called on him. On the contrary, his manner was perfectly bland and polite ; and many a young gentleman at his first interview has been so attracted by it as to fancy Mr. Melchisadech the best-tempered and most obliging fellow in the world. Certainly such young gentlemen were not the best of physiognomists, or a keen observance of that

hawk's eye might have read them a different lesson.

"Devilish good fellow in his way," young Greenhorn would mutter to himself as he stepped into his cabriolet and drove from the discounter's door.

"Young idiot!" Mr. Melchisadech would observe to himself on the same occasion, "only wants time to become as great a rogue as he is a fool—no matter—more grist to the mill—I'll pluck *him*—every feather of him."

And now that we have Mr. Melchisadech and his room before us, let us wait and see a few of Mr. Melchisadech's visitors; for it is past ten o'clock and they will be coming in thickly ere long.

A young man has just dismounted from a thorough-bred mare which his groom, equally well-mounted, holds. The young man knocks at the door; it is opened by a nondescript, and not very clean-looking animal, who may be a clerk or a servant.

“Is Mr. Melchisadech at home?”

“He is—and so the young man hands a card to the dirty clerk (we will call him so), and the dirty clerk reads the name, “Mr. Wiggins,” requests the young gentleman to enter, shows him into the front parlour, and proceeds to the back one with the card.

Immediately afterwards the young gentleman is conducted into the presence of Mr. Melchisadech, in a state of some tremour and excitement; for really your first visit to your first jew, touching your first bill transaction, is generally rather nervous work, and an era in the existence of most “fast” young men.

“Take a seat,” says Mr. Melchisadech, in his blindest tone.

Mr. Wiggins does so—clears his throat—mentions that he has not the pleasure of Mr. Melchisadech’s acquaintance, but he believes that gentleman knows Captain Rougenoir?

“Certainly—I have that honour,” replies the money-lender.

“A particular friend of mine—and a brother officer,” says Wiggins.

“Oh, indeed—then you are in the —th Lancers?” and Mr. Melchisadech makes a little note of that fact. “What rank, may I ask?”

“Cornet,” says Wiggins, heartily wishing it were Colonel.

Mr. Melchisadech makes a bow as much as to say, “proceed—I’m all attention.”

“I was mentioning to Rougenoir that I was rather hard-up,” said Mr. Wiggins, trying to feel at his ease, “and he referred me to you as—as—” he was just going to say “*his Jew*,” but he stopped himself in time and substituted —“as a gentleman who might accommodate me.”

Mr. Melchisadech bowed again, and merely said—

“I presume Captain Rougenoir did not offer to be your security?”

“No !” answered Wiggins.

“It is not at all necessary,” said Melchisedech (who had no great opinion of the Captain’s security at all). “May I ask the name and profession of your father?”

“Thomas Wiggins of Manchester—Mill-owner,” replied the cornet, colouring a little, for he was ashamed of his father’s “profession.”

“Your age?”

“Twenty-two.”

“Sum required?”

“Five hundred pounds.”

“Very good—I shall be most happy to accommodate you, Mr. Wiggins. Be kind enough to call here on Monday at eleven—bring your certificate of baptism, or register of birth, with you, you will have to give me your acceptance for *six* hundred at three months, and the money you require shall be handed to you. As it is our first transaction, I will not require you to find another name. Good day, sir.”

And Mr. Wiggins leaves the room a happy man, because he has just taken the first step towards ruin of fortune and fame. And the money-lender rubs his hands, muttering—

“Pretty pickings there for a time—I like cotton-spinners’ sons—only you must not go *too* deep, or the old ones turn savage, and will let that cursed Insolvent Court clear off the score. A ‘landed-aristocracy’ man *never* allows this—but then the money is often very slow in raising.”

The neatest little Brougham in London is at the door, and the prettiest foot and ankle steps out of it and trips up the door steps. And the dirty clerk admits a most elegantly attired lady without a question; for he knows her well, and who does *not* know the most fascinating of young widows, Mrs. Clavering Maddison?

The dirty clerk even shews her without any preliminary delay into the presence of Mr. Melchisadech.

“My *dear* Mr. Melchisadech, how are you? I’m delighted to see you looking so well,” says the pretty widow entering the room.

And truly the pretty widow’s voice is exquisitely musical, and Melchisadech ought to feel delighted at the endearing tone in which she addresses him.

But Melchisadech is a “cool hand,” an old bird not easily caught with chaff even when flung to him by the hand of the most charming young widow in London. And therefore though perfectly polite he is *not* delighted.

“May I ask how I can serve you?” he enquires.

“Oh, my dear sir, I have had the most wretched fortune. That dreadful lady Caroline Gunter won three hundred pounds of me last night—I’m sure she *cheats*. And this morning I had faithfully promised to pay La Ravignole her bill—and then I have seen the most exquisite Arabian in London, and the

price is five hundred guineas, and the wretch who has it, positively refuses me *credit* !”

“ And so—?” asks Melchisadech.

“ And so—and so, my dear sir, I am compelled to ask you to aid me with the loan of a thousand pounds.”

“ Your income being, I believe, *two* thousand,” says the money-lender, politely, “ and settled without power of anticipation by you ?”

“ Yes—it is shameful to restrict a woman so, is it not ?” asked the lady with indignation.

The money-lender smiled.

“ You at present owe me four thousand, I think ?” he remarked.

“ But my life is insured, you know,” said the lady, “ and you have my bonds.”

“ Certainly,” replied Mr. Melchisadech ; “ but I really think four thousand quite a large enough debt to be owed to one person by a lady of two thousand a year, tied up.”

"You cruel man," said the lady, trying one of those looks that have driven the senses clean out of the head of all the guardsmen they have ever been levelled at. It was as harmless against Melchisadech as a pea-shooter against a rhinoceros.

"Then I suppose I must give you *this*," she said, after a pause, colouring very much, and producing a piece of stamped paper across which was the name of Lord Raven.

Melchisadech turned the hawk's eye keenly and fully upon her. She winced and blushed, and looked as guilty as if she had given him a forgery. But the signature was genuine enough, and he knew it—it was not *that* his look meant.

"You shall have the money," he said, "favor me with a call, to-morrow." And he bowed the confused beauty out of the room, who hastened to her brougham, and as it drove away, sunk back into a corner and burst into tears.

“So it’s come to that, eh?” muttered Melchisadech. “The lovely Mrs. Clavering Maddison, in the power of Lord Raven! A few months more and which will be most bankrupt—her fortune or her character? No matter—the security is good—more grist to the mill.”

“Sir Reginald Monkton,” announces the dirty clerk.

“Ah, my old boy, how are you?” cries a rather “slangy” voice, as a rakish looking man of five-and-thirty enters the room. “Getting as plump as your own money-bags, I swear.”

“In your usual spirits, Sir Reginald, I see,” replies the money-lender, with the nearest approach to *bonhommie* he can command. “What can I do for you?”

“There you are—down on me directly—straight to business at once,” says the baronet. “Why couldn’t you chat a little first about the opera, and the last division and Epsom (and

be hanged to it) and so on, and let us glide into the business by degrees?"

"You forget that I'm *only* a man of business," replies Melchisadech.

"Very well then—here goes. The Oaks has cleaned me out of three thousand, when I made sure of winning fifteen. That cursed little Petifa filly *ought* to have won—I believe the whole thing is 'a sell.' Well—will you let me have the three thousand *now*—to-day?"

"Not to-day, but to-morrow, as early as you please," replies Melchisadech, who always insists on making his clients pay him a second visit.

"Very well—at ten then precisely—to-morrow's settling-day, at the corner, you know, so good bye old fellow. By-the-way you don't want a good hunter do you?"

"No, I thank you."

And the baronet departed.

"Another fool," chuckles the money-lender," and the best one I've got—ten

thousand a-year and no incumbrances on the estate—won't mortgage an acre at three per cent, but borrows of me at one hundred per cent in preference, to keep his land clear and get his money at a day's notice. Very well—more fools—more grist."

But there is another client waiting in the parlour, and his card is now brought in to the money-lender who reads—

"Mr. Lionel Danvers."

However, we have no time to stay longer at Mr. Melchisadech's—so we will take our departure, congratulating Mr. Lionel Danvers on his visit, and hoping that it may not lead him as it has most others—to ruin, shame, beggary, and remorse.

CHAPTER XVII.

To our taste, Mrs. Townley St. Leger's are the best *réunions* in London.

Formality is not admitted within the doors. Dulness is a rare guest. Wealth receives no particular favour; but intellect is welcomed with every honour. The exclusives sneer at Mrs. Townley St. Leger's entertainments, because they meet people there whom they meet nowhere else. An author, not sufficiently fashionable to be a "lion,"—a man of science not puffed into notoriety—an actor, and even an actress (!) may be met in Mrs. St. Leger's drawing-room: and when we have mentioned these few characters, out of a long catalogue that we might compose of similar offensive individuals, we are satisfied that we have said enough to account for the horror with which

exclusiveism feels bound to regard the house that gives them shelter.

And yet Mrs. St. Leger's *réunions* are fashionable. Truth to say, the lady herself is gay and witty, and well-bred; and even those who are most inclined to sneer at her guests can find little to attack in the hostess. They feel that she is their equal, or their superior in the petty arts, or petty accomplishments in which the whole of their energies and abilities are embarked; they know that she is as good an authority as any of them, on matters of fashion; that her toilette is as perfect; her equipage as unexceptionable; her manners as graceful; her air as distinguished as those of any of the gay butterflies fluttering in the sunshine of Belgravia and May Fair; while in every higher point of excellence—in sense, perception, information and wit, they feel the superiority which their vanity dares not acknowledge.

Mrs. Townley St. Leger is not exactly a "fast" woman, nor a "lion"-hunter, and yet she has an unconventional way of doing things

which might almost subject her to the former appellation, while she decidedly seeks out and seizes every opportunity of bringing into her circle each rising star in literature, science, the drama, and the fine arts—so that the guests of her drawing-room, on any evening, could of themselves turn out the next number of the *Athenæum* as creditably as the regular staff of that delightful journal. But then it is intellect Mrs. St. Leger seeks and not men who, justly or unjustly, have acquired a *name* for it. For example—you are turning over a portfolio on her table. A quiet and gentlemanly-looking man by your side makes some remark on it—you reply—the conversation goes on, and you find yourself talking with one of the most intelligent men you ever met. You take an early opportunity of enquiring his name of a friend. The name is told you, and you know nothing of it. “What is he?” “An author.” Perhaps you are rather disappointed to find that he belongs to a profession in which he has not had talent enough to make himself known

to yourself and the generality of a reading public. Poor fellow ! he is a magazine-writer, working hard for the crusts of his calling and filling up many an anonymous page over which the world weeps or smiles. His fame is yet to come—or never to be ; but his hostess has judged him by a better test than that of fame, which is a gift that fortune sometime refuses even to the worthy—she has judged him by his genius, and *that* is God's gift.

It is impossible for the dullest of dunces in fashion's school (and Heaven knows she has an unlimited supply of them,) to be otherwise than amused at Mrs. Townley St. Leger's. Does he like music ? He shall hear it as perfect in her salons as in the concert-room of Her Majesty's Theatre. Dancing ? Would he wish for a better accompaniment, a prettier partner, or a smoother *parquet* than he meets with here ? Has he a taste for the fine arts ? Let him glance around him and feast his eyes, or stroll to yonder large table strewn with little gems of art, or turn over the pages of any

portfolio lying there—he will find them very unlike “ladies’ albums” in general. Is he a man of literary pursuits? Let him join that group of authors, editors, *feuilletonistes*, poets, novelists, reviewers, and Apollo knows what besides. There shall he hear the discussion of Thackeray’s last work (provided the author be not of the people), or witness the dissection of Tennyson’s last poem. Thence shall he carry away many a little gem of thought or expression—and perchance also wonder why some of the most eloquent on paper are the most silent of conversationalists. Is he a politician? Yonder are men whose names are not unknown in the senate—let him join them if he will—and he may be as wise as the editor of the *Times* half an hour hence, and Heaven give him joy of his wisdom! Is he a mere man-about-town, who loves only the gossip of St. James’s Street and Pall Mall? Can he doubt that those perfectly dressed gentlemen lounging about the room in all parts of it—surely he will recognize Poole’s coats and Buck-

master's continuations—are of the veritable club breed and will gratify his exquisitely refined taste?

And wherever he shall go, he will chance to meet, if only for a moment, his charming hostess, and he will wonder to which section she is attached by taste and habit—so thoroughly can she assimilate her tone to either—and so well is she informed on every individual subject which occupies the thoughts and discussions of each one.

“Tell me—who is that good-looking fellow, talking to Mrs. St. Leger?” asked the honourable Tom Saville, of a friend. Lest the reader should wonder at an honourable Tom applying a complimentary description to one of his own sex, we will state that the young gentleman was blessed with an unusual share of good-nature.

“His name's Mowbray,” replied his friend. “He's very rich, and a decent fellow in his way—though I can't say *I* think him good-looking,” and here the speaker settled his white

neckcloth with an air of intense self-satisfaction, "but then he fancies he's clever and writes for publication—and that sort of thing. Wonder he can't leave such snobbish things alone—don't you?"

"Well," rejoined the honourable Tom, "I don't know why a fellow shouldn't write if he likes. For my part I *couldn't* write a page to save my neck, and as for poetry, I never did a verse in my life—I always paid other fellows to do them for me at school. It cost me a fortune in apples."

"But fancy printing what you write!" said the other, "and having those newspaper fellows reviewing you, as they call it, and saying all sorts of impertinent things—as they can with safety, for they know you can't call them out."

"Why not?" asked Saville—not exactly knowing what he *was* asking.

"Why not!" replied the other in surprise. "In the first place a newspaper man isn't a gentleman—in the next place he wouldn't

come out if you called him—in the third place how are you to know who wrote the article?”

“The last is the only good reason as far as I can see,” said Saville. “In the ‘first place,’ (as you say) I don’t see *why* a newspaper editor shouldn’t be a gentleman. In the ‘second place,’ I don’t see *why* he shouldn’t come out if he thought he had given you any right to ask him—though if he only treated anything *you* might write, my dear Townsend, as it deserved, I should doubt the necessity of any one fighting about it.”

Mr. Townsend looked a trifle graver than before, and so Tom Saville changed his tone of banter and said—

“But seriously, Townsend. This Mowbray—who is he? what is he?”

“His father was a Staffordshire man and had good property in the county. Gerard there, was his only son. He went to Harrow, but declined college—to his father’s great disgust. He joined the 7th Lancers for a time,

but got sick of them—bad taste that, for they were a first-rate set of fellows.”

“All drove four-in-hand, gave champagne luncheons, got head-over-ears in debt, and had a weakness for roulette and hazard I suppose you mean?” interrupted Tom, enquiringly. Townsend didn’t condescend to notice the interruption, but went on.

“Well—Mowbray left the army and went abroad. I believe he went everywhere, from Copenhagen to Cairo, and only came back six months ago, being summoned home by his father’s illness. The governor died and Gerard came in for Haslop Hall and six thousand a-year.”

“And instead of devoting his London season to Rotten Row, the clubs, the coulisses and the hells; and the rest of the year to Newmarket, the partridges, the foxes, country squires and country parsons, the fellow has the bad taste to study now and then and to write books, eh?” asked Tom Saville.

“He has written *one* book,” replied Mr.

Townsend, with a half-offended look, "something about his travels I believe, but—"

"But of course you don't know. Quite right, my dear Townsend. A man whom nature has made so perfect as yourself doesn't want the adventitious attractions of a head crammed with other men's thoughts. It is always the dullest men who have read the most books—and how vilely the fellows always dress, don't they?"

And so saying Tom Saville sauntered up to a pretty girl in pink, and whirled her away in a *deux temps*.

It is a mystery to us how Mrs. Townley St. Leger contrives to escape "dowagers." Those awful personages, of such extensive dimensions and resplendent with diamonds and old lace, who flourish so luxuriantly at all other assemblies, are rare at Mrs. St. Leger's. Who does not know as soon as he has entered a ball-room, the exact spot where the caps and turbans, the brocade and the India shawls, will be congregated? Not far from the fire-place—not

far from those great cosy couches and inviting lounges. If he has a pretty and agreeable partner on his arm does he not shun that spot even as he would avoid the reputed lurking place of a hungry tiger? For he knows full well that if he passes by it, he is either marked down as prey for their tongues, greedy of scandal, to discuss; or perchance his fair partner may be pounced on by one of the turbans who is her mama or her aunt or her chaperonne of some kind, and ruthlessly withdraw from his disinterested protection. He is tolerably safe at Mrs. St. Leger's, though as we said, it puzzles us to conceive how she contrives to dispense with the company of the "dowagers."

She was not, however, quite free from them to-night. Two very decided specimens of the much-to-be-avoided genus were sitting on a large sofa, in one corner of the front drawing-room. Between them was a young girl of not more than eighteen, beautiful as Hebe. We need not stop to describe her now, as she is known

to the reader, but it seemed as if Gerard Mowbray was anxious to be able to do so ; for he sat at a table not far off, and pretended to be looking over a volume of engravings, but the hypocrite's eyes scarcely wandered for a moment from the face of Flora Danvers, as she sat quite unconscious of his looks, and listening with heroic patience to the twaddle of the old ladies who were both alternately talking to her, and asking her questions about every one in the room.

“How beautiful !” he exclaimed, and rather louder than he intended.

“Yes—it's devilish good, certainly ; but you can hardly call that sort of thing beautiful—can you, Mowbray ?” drawled a voice at his elbow.

Gerard started, and was going to forget the rules of good breeding by an imprecation, as he turned his head and saw young Townsend by his side, looking at the “H. B.” sketch which Mowbray held in his hand, and to which

the listener supposed his admiration applied—though, in truth, he had never seen it.

“Ah, Townsend! how are you?” said Mowbray, wishing him devoutly ‘five fathoms under the Rialto.’

“Deucedly bored, my dear fellow. I think I shall go—will you come and sup with me at the club?”

“No, I thank you,” replied Gerard, smiling. “By-the-way, Townsend, who is that pretty girl between the—”

“Between the tabbies—eh?” said Townsend. “Ah, its Flora Danvers, only daughter of the old Colonel of ‘ours.’ Shall I introduce you?”

Before Mowbray could decide whether he would not rather forego the pleasure of knowing the beauty a little longer, than be introduced by such a puppy, Flora had vanished from her place between the dowagers, and was gliding through a quadrille in the next room.

Even there she was not free from ardent looks. A tall, pale youth, with light hair and glowing blue eyes, and a forehead that might have served for Apollo's, stood lounging by one of the folding-doors, and pretending to look indifferently at the various dancers; but he, too, was a hypocrite; for his eyes seldom strayed from the lovely form of Flora Danvers, and their expression belied the air of negligence and *insouciance* he was endeavouring to assume.

Turn away, Frank Nugent. There is more danger in gazing on that beauty than in facing a shower of grape-shot. The one would give thee but a momentary pang, and end all mortal ills for ever—the other will lead thee on, step by step, into the web of fascination, and, once there, thou shalt be tortured like the poor fly in the spider's grasp—thou shalt writhe, day by day, and night by night, with a pain which no leech hath skill to cure; thy pale face shall become paler—thy lustrous eye yet more bright,

but with the brilliancy of feverish anxiety—thy brain, unquiet now, shall then know no rest through the long, long hours of fallacious hope. Turn away—but no ! it is too late ! The sweet passion has entered into thy veins—the world contains no antidote to drive it thence—the fiat has gone forth from Heaven’s chancery—thy doom is fixed ! And what but anguish, disappointment, and misery, shall await the poor, unknown labourer in the field of thought, who dares to love the high-born and wealthy daughter of Fortune ? Poor Frank !

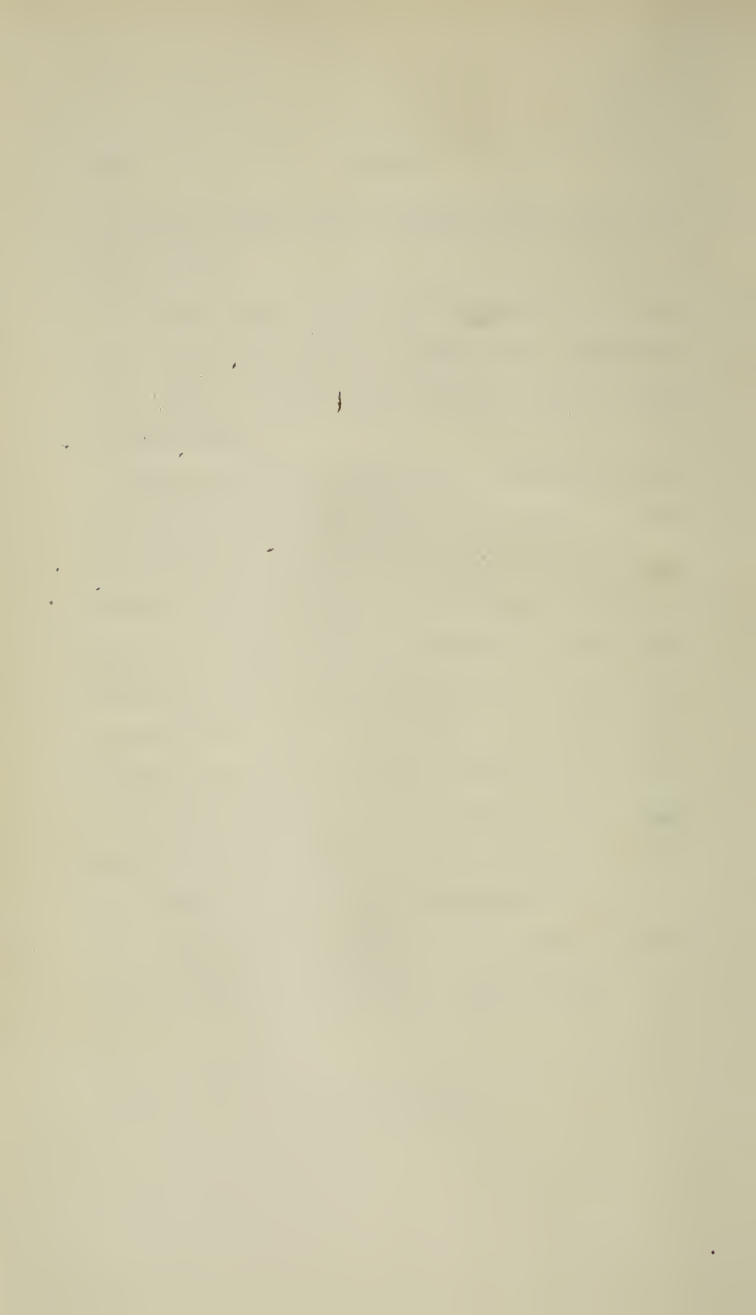
“Colonel Danvers’s carriage stops the way,” shouts the link-boy outside to the footman within, and the message reverberates through hall and staircase.

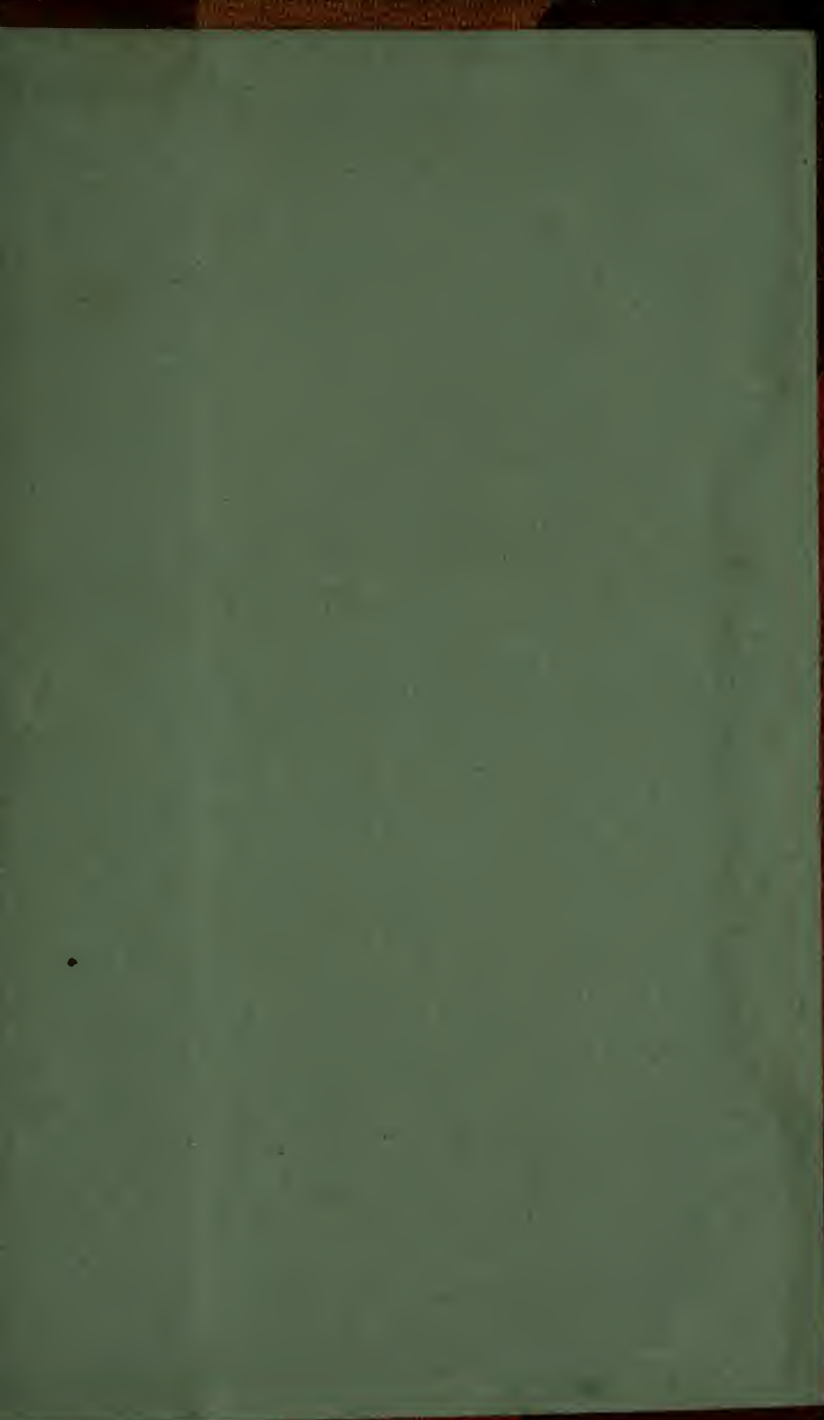
A fine old soldier and a lovely girl descend the stairs together, and pass along the hall, while two young men draw aside to make room for them. The eyes of each are fixed on

the young girl's form, and their looks tell more than words.

The old man and his daughter are gone, and the eyes of the young men encounter each other. Mars have mercy on us ! what defiant looks !

They are gone in their turn. Gerard Mowbray's brougham has rattled him home to St. James's Place ; and Frank Nugent has walked all the way to Pentonville. Both are in bed and trying to sleep ; but a tiresome little fairy drives Morpheus away from either—and to each her laughing eyes, in shape, in colour, in expression, are those of Flora Danvers ! The man of fortune and the man of letters, whom Fate seems to have placed so far apart, are now engrossed by the same thoughts, brought to the same level, the slaves of the same master passion—aye, even in their very dreams.





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